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AN ESSAY

ON SOME

Ancient Coins, Medals, and Gems,



AN ESSAY

ON

Ancient Coins, Medals, and Gems,

AS ILLUSTRATING

THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY

IN THE EARLY AGES.

BY

THE REV. R. WALSH, L.L.D. M.R.I.A.

&c. &c. &c.

**AUTHOR OF A JOURNEY FROM CONSTANTINOPLE
TO ENGLAND.**

SECOND EDITION GREATLY ENLARGED.

LONDON:

HOWELL AND STEWART,

295, HOLBORN.

1828.

Thomas White, Printer,
Johnson's Court.

TO THE
RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT STRANGFORD,
&c. &c. &c.

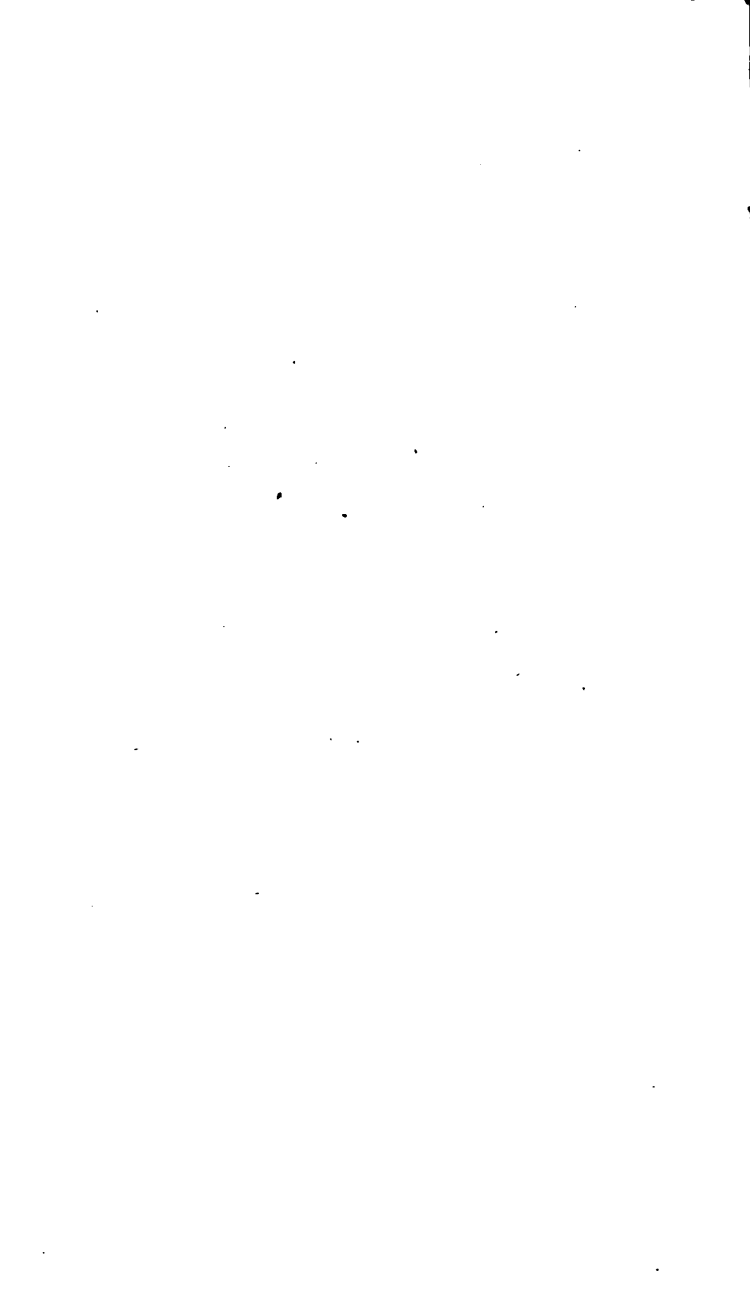
WHOSE COLLECTION OF ANCIENT COINS IS AS VALUABLE
AS HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT IS EXTENSIVE,

THIS ESSAY,
ON AN INTERESTING BUT NEGLECTED DEPARTMENT OF
THE MEDALLIC SCIENCE,

IS DEDICATED,
AS AN APPROPRIATE TRIBUTE OF RESPECT AND ESTEEM,

BY

THE AUTHOR.



ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE first edition of this Essay contained notices of such Coins only as were in my possession, with one or two exceptions; it was therefore brief and imperfect, as necessarily confined to very limited materials. By the kindness of friends, to whose collections I have since had access, I have now considerably enlarged it, and made what appears to me to be an exceedingly curious and interesting addition, by introducing some of the remains of the Gnostic sects, who formed so distinguished and striking a feature in the early ages of the Christian church. It may be thought that I have given them an importance to which they are not entitled; but I am disposed to think that the early ecclesiastical writers were competent judges of the state of the Christian world when they wrote; and I have not attached more consequence to those extraordinary sectarians, than I am warranted to do by the writings of their contemporaries.

I had stated, as a subject of regret, that no one had, I believe, made Christian Coins subservient to the details of the spread and progress of Christianity among mankind; and my attention has since been directed more than once to Mr. Taylor's edition of Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible. Without at all meaning to question the merit of that very learned and useful work, or the elucidations the numerous Coins there exhibited give to Scriptural allusions and biblical interpretations, I presume I had not asserted too much. There are but two Christian Coins, or rather one, of different sizes among the fac-similes there exhibited, and these do not allude to any historical event connected with the progress of Christianity: the illustrations which the rest afford are directed to other objects. In the voluminous and learned works, indeed, of Bandurius, Du Cange, Vaillant, and others, there are scattered notices of some events alluded to by the Coins, and these notices I have availed myself of, and acknowledged.

AN ESSAY

ON SOME ANCIENT COINS, MEDALS, AND GEMS, AS ILLUSTRATING THE EARLY PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

COINS, as connected with inscriptions on stone, are memorials of historical facts, more certain, because more permanent and unalterable, than the writings of the historian. There is not now in existence a single manuscript that was actually written by the hand of any author who lived a few hundred years ago, except perhaps the mutilated fragments buried in Herculaneum or the Catacombs of Egypt; but there are many historical documents in metal and marble, which have survived the lapse of more than two thousand years, and are as legible as when they were first published. Such documents, therefore, when known to be genuine, are irresistible evidence which no future historian can controvert, because they are not liable to the corruptions and uncertainties introduced by copyists into manuscripts, which are of

necessity transcribed at intervals, as the materials on which the writing was originally made, fall into decay. The study, therefore, of coins and gems, is recommended to our notice by many interesting circumstances ; as displaying the most unerring and best preserved monuments of ancient art ; as conveying to us the dress and manners of the times to which they belong ; as bringing us acquainted with the character and features of the persons they represent ; but, above all, as illustrating the events to which their fabrication alludes, and so becoming the standard of history, and the testimony of its truth and falsehood.

But while great pains have been taken to illustrate by their means the historical facts of Pagan Greece, and Rome, there are few who have thought it worth their while to make them subservient to the more interesting details of the spread and progress of Christianity among mankind, as if that circumstance had so deteriorated the arts, that no Coin, Medal, or Gem, which contained any allusion to it was worthy of the slightest notice of the collector.* This affected

* Pinkerton is particularly testy on this subject. Coins of the Byzantine emperors he calls "utterly barbarous," and says, "that the admission of a coin of that barbarous nation, the Jews,

contempt has enabled me to make a larger collection in the east than I could hope to obtain had I more competitors, and from this I shall select some, which, with a few others, may afford a brief illustration of some historical facts in the early ages of Christianity.

The Coins alluded to are of different metals—gold, silver, and bronze, and of different dimensions, and the Gems of different materials: these are noticed in the *fac similes*.

In speaking of Coins, the *obverse* means the principal face, on which is generally placed the head of the monarch; the *reverse*, the opposite side, on which is generally some device. The whole surface is called the *field*; letters on the field are called the *inscription*; letters round the edge, the *legend*. The part divided by a line at the bottom is called the *exergue* :* letters in the exergue generally imply the place where the coin was stamped; if several letters form a

is justly esteemed a disgrace to a cabinet." The only work on Coins published in England before his Essay, was an ingenious little treatise by the Rev. Dr. Jennings; he unluckily noticed some Jewish and Christian coins, and Pinkerton says he would "pass him over in silent contempt, as he is taken up with Jewish shekels and divinity, as in duty bound to pray!"—Pinkerton on Medals, vol. i. p. 13.

* εἰς ἔργον, out of the work.

single character, it is called a *monogram* : these two latter are very obscure and imperfectly known. Mediobarbus and others give them an interpretation very complex ; I have rather adopted the conjectures which are more obvious and simple. In speaking of Gems, I have used the term *face*, or *side* ; there is sometimes but one, and if there be two, there is nothing to mark what would distinguish the principal one.

The first I shall mention, as probably the earliest in point of time, is of Hebrew origin. In the year 1812, a peasant in the county of Cork, in Ireland, was digging potatoes, accompanied by his daughter, who picked them up as they were thrown above the ground. Among them she found, encrusted with clay, what she thought to be a large button, and handing it to her father, he rubbed the edge on the sleeve of his coat, and in a short time it became bright, like gold. He now imagined he had gained a prize, and proceeded with it to his landlord, Mr. Corlett, a gentleman of Cork, of the Society of Friends. He further cleaned it, and found it to be an antique medal of singular structure and device. On one side was the head of our Saviour, and on the other a Hebrew inscription ; both, however, considerably injured by

time. As the place where the potatoes were planted had been the site of a very ancient monastery, coeval with the first introduction of Christianity into Ireland, but of which even the ruins had long since disappeared,* it was imagined, with every probability, that this medal had been brought into Ireland by some of the religious community at a very early period, and as such, was an object of great interest. Facsimiles, therefore, were taken from it, and sent about, and in a short time it excited in no slight degree the attention of the learned, and various conjectures were made as to its age and origin. About this time a medal of a similar kind came into my possession, obtained from a Polish Jew, at Rostoc, in Germany; and on comparing it with that found in Ireland, it appeared to be an exact counterpart, and struck from the same die. As it had not suffered the same injuries from attrition and erosion, it was in a highly perfect state of preservation, and the letters, which were much injured in the former, and caused some obscurity in the inscription, were in this sharp and distinct as when they were struck. But the bust of Christ

* Many religious edifices in Ireland were destroyed by the Danes long before the period of the Reformation.

was singularly beautiful : it had a pensive sublimity in its air and character that exactly accorded with our ideas of its great prototype, as if he had sat for the picture ; and the execution denoted it to have been the production of an era when the arts were in the highest vigour. It would appear by the testimony of different writers, that it was first mentioned by *Theseus Ambrosius*,* and after him had been a subject of enquiry by the learned of Europe for more than two centuries ; that it made its first appearance in Rome, when the Venus de Medici and other long-lost productions of ancient art were again brought to light ; that inferior copies of it were multiplied, with slight variations, but that the original was not a coin, but a tessera, or amulet, struck by the first Jewish converts to Christianity, and worn by them as a pious memorial of their Master;† and finally, that the

* The work of *Theseus Ambrosius* is of great rarity and antiquity ; there is not a copy of it, I believe, in the British Museum.

† *Ælius Lampridius* relates that *Alexander Severus* kept the representation of Christ with that of *Apollonius*, *Abraham*, *Orpheus*, and others, on which he makes the following remark. *At vero Paganos imaginem Christi aliquando conservasse, discipulos neglexisse, horret animus omnino cogitare multo minus credere.* “ The mind shudders to think, much less to believe, that Pagans should preserve a representation of Christ, and his disciples neglect it.” See *Num. Ær. Vet. Christ.* Both *Irenæus* and *Eusebius* mention that they had such pictures or representations.

date was indicated by the Hebrew letter aleph on the obverse, which then, as well as now, represented the numeral I, and indicated that it was struck in the first year after the resurrection.* The opinions here hazarded have been much disputed, particularly the supposed date. Nor has the use for which it was struck been less a subject of difference. It must have been intended either for a circulating coin, a medal to commemorate an interesting event, a relic to gratify pious credulity, or an amulet, or charm, to protect the wearer against injury or misfortune. All these opinions are adopted by different writers; but whatever might have been the origin, there is strong evidence that it was generally applied to the fourth purpose, and used as an abrasax, in that class of superstitious fabrications which were so highly prized in the first ages of Christianity. Such was the opinion of the Jew from whom it was purchased, who had marked it Christian Talisman, and parted

* Many learned modern Jews, to whom I shewed the medal, concurred in this conjecture. Years, on coins of that æra, are frequently expressed by Greek and Roman letters, representing numerals; the regular dates on Christian coins were not introduced for several centuries after. On this subject, however, while I quote the opinion of others, my own agrees with the Commentator of Jobert, "*que la vraie solution de ces Ænigmes Numismatiques n'est pas encore trouvée.*"—Job, ii. 297.

with it as a thing highly valuable to a Christian, but of no importance to a Jew. Under this impression, the late learned vice-provost of Trinity College, Dublin, gave me the following interpretation of the inscription founded upon the mysteries of the Cabala. The letters in the lines are purposely placed in the following arrangement and combination, and so differ from the correct mode of Hebrew writing :

1. 2. 3. 4. 7. 8. 28. 52.

1. Implied unity or individuality.

2. 3. ——— lucky and unlucky numbers.

4. 1st square } denote space.
8. 1st cube }

7. implies week } denotes time.
52. ——— year }

28. 2nd perfect number.

The following then would be the influence of the amulet: “ to the individual who bears this, “ in every state of life whether prosperous or “ adverse, in every part of space, and in every “ portion of time, it will prove a perfect security “ through the Lord Jesus, who, being the Messiah, reigns,” &c.

The value annexed to the medal has also

been a subject of much controversy, some holding it in the most extravagant estimation, and some rejecting it altogether as unworthy of a place in any cabinet. But it appears to me that both those opinions are erroneous. There is no certain evidence that it has a claim to the high antiquity and interesting origin that some assign to it ; yet it is, nevertheless, certain that it has a respectable claim to the attention of the curious. When literature and science began to dawn in Europe after the darkness of the middle ages, and the minds of inquisitive men were first directed to search for the remains of ancient art, this medal was discovered. It was seen at Rome by Theseus Ambrosius, and described as a great curiosity in the pontificate of Julius II. the immediate predecessor of Leo X. the reviver of learning in Europe. This proves that it existed at that time, and was among the objects of ancient art that then engaged the attention of the learned ; but it does not prove that it did not exist long before. Indeed the very circumstance of its wanting a nimbus of glory round the head, is a presumption amounting almost to a certainty, that it was not fabricated after the 7th century, at which time that symbol of sanctity was adopted as a distinctive mark of

saored persons, and it was considered impious to depict them without it.* The very curious and scarce work of Theseus Ambrosius has been but recently found in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, where it had remained for two centuries unknown, and but for this late and accidental discovery his evidence would be wanting in the enquiry. How many rare works of a similar kind and earlier date, illustrative of the subject may yet be discovered, we cannot presume to say; but since his time the medal has been noticed and described by a series of writers down to the present day.† Without

* On this subject, Julio Bartoleccio de Cellino, in his *Biblioth. Mag. Rabbinica*, in 1695, thus indignantly expresses himself when noticing this medal, "*Cur autem caput Salvatoris diademate non ornatur? Hæc injuria Salvatori illata tolleranda non est!*"—"Why is not the head of the Saviour ornamented with a diadem? This insult offered to the Saviour is not to be endured!"

† Among those who have subsequently noticed the medal, the following authors have given fac-similes of it in their works, with slight variations of the original in the several copies, viz. *Waserus de Antiq. Num. Hebræorum*, 1605; *Alstedius Præcognita Theologia*, 1616; *Hottingerus de Cippis Hebræicis*, 1658; *Wagenseil Sota*, 1672; *Leusden Philologus, Heb. Mixt.* 1696; *Surenhusius Mischna*, 1700; *Rowland Mona Antiqua*, 1702. One similar to that found at Friars Walk, in Cork, was discovered in Rowland's time, at the ancient Cirque of Brip-gwin, in Wales, and deemed by this learned antiquarian so great a curiosity, that he sent it to his friend Luid, the keeper of the

myself deciding on any of these conflicting opinions, I have merely referred to their authorities; but I think it not too much to assert, that what has been thus an object of interest and research to the learned men of Europe for nearly three hundred years, must be of no small value in the estimation of a curious enquirer.

The metal of which it is composed is a singular composition; it is much paler than brass, does not tarnish by exposure to air, and might be mistaken for pure gold, did not its exceeding levity immediately detect it. Its weight in air is 262,76 grains, and its loss in water 31,16, giving a specific gravity of 8,45. It has another remarkable property which distinguishes it; it is very sonorous, and it thus seems identified with the *χαλκὸς ἤχων* of the New Testament, which might have been the object of the apostle's allusion, as well because it was light, as because it was "sounding."

Ashmole Musæum, at Oxford, as a most valuable acquisition to the archæologist. It was unfortunately lost by the way, but he has preserved a fac-simile of it. After such testimony I cannot assent, to the gratuitous assumption of Jobert, "*quoique elle eût pû être faite par quelque Juif converti au Christianisme, est cependant une de ces medailles, dont lest curieux ne doivent faire aucun état.*"—*Job. i. 305.*

In the annexed medal, No. I, the obverse represents the head of our Saviour as described in the letter said to be sent, by Lentulus to Tiberius; his hair divided after the manner of the Nazarenes, plain to his ears, and waving on his shoulders; his beard thick, not long but forked, the face beautiful; and the bust fine; over the whole the tunic falls in graceful folds. On the obverse is the Hebrew letter א aleph, with the word יהושע the Jewish name of Jesus. On the reverse is this inscription,

סוּחַ מָלֵךְ כֹּה בְשָׁלוֹם זָאֵר מָאֲרִים עֲשֵׂה דִי

The Messiah has reigned; he came in peace, and being made the light of man he lives.

THE Gnostics.

At the time that Christianity was promulgated to mankind, the nations under the dominion of the Romans, that is the larger part of the civilized world, were greatly addicted to mysterious practices; supposing that there existed in nature certain influences which they could control and manage by occult signs expressed in different ways and on different materials, and among the nations most notorious for these opinions, were the Jews and the Egyptians. As Christianity originated with

one, and many of its earliest professors were found amongst the other, it is not surprising that they should have brought with them, and engrafted on the new religion, such opinions and practices as they had entertained in the old. Accordingly we read that very early the apostles themselves found it necessary to guard the disciples against such persons, cautioning them to avoid "profane and vain babblings and oppositions to what is falsely called science;"* and in several passages of the epistle are evident allusions to similar errors among the first professors of Christianity, even in the apostolic ages. Nor did the evil cease, as the doctrines of the gospel expanded themselves beyond the local prepossessions of its early converts: a number of persons, in succession, for two centuries afterwards, are recorded as distinguished leaders of these wild opinions, which mixed up the sacred truths of the gospel with the fantastic imaginations of a visionary science, and a vast multitude of disciples all over the then known world were found to adopt them.

The first person mentioned as a leader of these opinions was Simon, a man of Samaria. He had addicted himself to occult practices,

* Timothy, vi. 20.

and had so beguiled the understandings of the people, that he persuaded them he was some extraordinary person, and they all affirmed that "the man was the great power of God."* He, with the rest of the people of Samaria, were converted by Philip's preaching; and having become a believer in the Gospel, he was baptized; but his old habits and practices remained unchanged. He proffered money to the apostles to be endued like them with the power of conferring the Holy Spirit, and was severely rebuked for his impiety; but brought to a sense of his base misconceptions of the divine gifts, he became penitent, and requested the apostles to intercede with God for him. From hence he went to Rome, and continued there during the time of Nero's persecution, and taught his followers that they might indifferently conform to the worship of idols, and so they escaped the cruelties perpetrated upon their more conscientious brethren.† It appears that he had made such a progress in mechanical knowledge, that he undertook to fly in the theatre before all the spectators, and actually did support himself in the air, as Arnobius says, in a fiery chariot, while all the Romans were looking at

* Acts viii. 9, 34.

† Origen contr. Cels. lib. vi.

him ;* but he failed in the attempt, and was crushed with the fall, which the fathers attribute to the intercession of Peter and Paul, who were at Rome at the time, and witnessed the experiment: they prayed that the demons who supported him should be made to abandon him, and the consequence was that he fell to the ground. Many of his opinions and practices are recorded, and form a strange and deformed picture of the first Sectarian in the Christian church. He brought about with him a woman named Helena, who he affirmed had animated formerly the body of her who had caused the Trojan war; and by various transmigrations had passed into her present form; he said she was the first conception of his mind, and by her he had himself created angels and archangels; and that by these angels the world was afterwards formed, a fancy which continued to be cherished by all his followers under different denominations for several succeeding centuries. He taught in Samaria that he was the Father, in Judea that he was the Son, and among the Gentiles that he was the Holy Spirit.† His

* Viderunt enim (Romani) cursum Simonis Magi et quadrigas igneas. Arnob. adv. Gentil. lib. li.

† Irenæus, lib. i. c. 20. Epiphani. 21.

disciples preserved certain representations of him under the form of Jupiter, and of his companion under that of Minerva, to which they annexed great efficacy and sanctity, and were perhaps the first of those Christian amulets which afterwards became so numerous; and certain sayings and opinions of his, called *Simoniani*, were the origin of much of that false and fantastic science which prevailed to such a degree among succeeding sectaries: the practices of his followers, as described by Epiphanius, are too foul to particularize.

Another of those men who had corrupted the purity of the Gospel by the admixture of Pagan fancies in the Apostolic ages, was *Nicholas*, one of the seven deacons, a proselyte of Antioch.* He is supposed to have been the founder of the sect of the *Nicolitains*, who had polluted the church of Asia, particularly that of Pergamus, and whom the evangelist reproves. The fathers are greatly divided as to the actual guilt of Nicholas himself; some affirming that his sole offence was first putting away his wife, a very beautiful woman, and then cohabiting with her again. But whatever may have been the degree of delinquency in the founders of

* Acts vi. 1.

the sect, his followers who assumed his name were guilty of such flagitious acts as to exceed in turpitude every other. They held that pleasure was the end and true blessedness of man, and that it principally consisted in the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes ; and what appeared to other Christians a no less heinous offence at the time, they indulged their appetites by eating, without scruple, of all meats offered to idols. They imagined a number of deities, to whom they gave extraordinary sounding names, calculated to strike their hearers with awe, such as Barbelo, Jaldabaoth, Caulauchach, and Meitram ;* and these names are recognized on many of the amulets which have been dug up several ages afterwards ; and to increase their number, every variety of the sect had a different tribe of deities. They did not endure long by the name of their founder, but have been distinguished by different other appellations. They were called Philionites, Stratonici, and Levitici, according to the variety and shades of opinions which prevailed among them ; but

* They had adopted this practice from the contemporary heathens, whom Lucian exposes *παραμυγνὺς ἅμα βαρβάρικα καὶ ἄσημα ὀνόματα καὶ πόλυσυλλαβα* "mingling with their rites, barbarous and senseless words of many syllables." Lucian *Neknom.*

they were all recognised by those who were not of their sects, by the contemptuous term of *βεβηρωται* or muddy, a reproach derived from the filth and turpitude of their practices, in celebrating their unhallowed rites.

Simon and Nicholas were succeeded by Menander, who lived in the reign of Vespasian, about seventy-five years after the birth of Christ. He was like Simon, a Samaritan, practised the same arts, and according to Justin Martyr, was driven by the same demons. He held that no one could be saved unless he was baptized in his name ; and that death could not reach any one who was so made his disciple. He had many followers at Antioch, who were persuaded they would never die.*

The next person of note who distinguished himself as a follower of Simon, and a promulgator of similar opinions, was Basilides, who eclipsed, by the singularity of his tenets, and the success with which he spread them, the fame of all his predecessors. This man was a native of Alexandria, who was particularly distinguished in the reign of Hadrian, about one hundred and twenty years after our Saviour's birth, for the profoundness of his mysteries, and the extra-

* Tertullian de Anima, p. 50.

vagant extent to which he carried them.* He formed a new race of angels, and invented appropriate and extraordinary names for them. He enjoined the doctrine of silence, like Pythagoras, and prescribed it to his disciples for five years.† He taught that God had sent his first born into the world, who was called Christ; that he appeared as a man, and accomplished all virtue, but did not suffer death really as was supposed; for Simon, the Cyrenean, was substituted in his place, and the Jews in error crucified him, while he assumed the form of Simon, and stood by uninjured, laughing at their folly, and so ascended into Heaven invisible to them all.‡ He declared, therefore, that he who believed that Christ was really crucified, was still a slave, and under the power of those who made the body; but he who denied it, was free from them. His maxim was, "Know all, but let none know you;" and hence his followers never performed their mysteries openly, or divulged them to the uninitiated. They denied the resurrection of the flesh strenuously, and insisted that no promise was made about the salvation of the body.§ They affirmed that all sins were not

* Eusebius Eccles. Hist. lib. iv. c. 7.

† Ibid.

‡ Irenæus, lib. i. c. 23.

§ Tertul. de præs. c. 46.

forgiven, but only such as were involuntary and done in ignorance.* The opinion they entertained of themselves was most extravagant, founded on the supposed superiority of their knowledge and attainments : they esteemed themselves only, and the members of their sect, as men ; and all the rest of the world, including all other sects of Christians, as dogs and swine ; and it was constantly inculcated by Basilides, that his followers should hold no communication with others, and so not cast their pearls before swine.† In order to give greater weight and authority to his doctrines, Basilides composed a *Gospel*, according to the testimony of Origen and Ambrosius, which he inscribed with his own name. In several of his discourses he affirmed, that it was an indifferent thing whether his disciples acknowledged or denied Christ before men, or sacrificed to other deities ; and, finally, that there was no punishment for offences committed in this life, but a transmigration of souls after death.‡ He died at Alexandria, in the reign of Hadrian, about the time that Barchochebas persecuted the Christians. He seems to have been the most extraordinary

* Clemens Alex. Strom. lib. iv. † Epiphanius Hæres. 34.

‡ Origen in Math.

and notorious of all those who deformed Christianity with their own impurities. He left behind him a son, named Isidórus, who inherited all his father's impious follies. He wrote what he called a Treatise on Morality, which the fathers represent as a sink of impurity.*

Basilides was immediately followed by Saturninus, or Saturnellus, a native of Antioch, who established there a school to teach his opinions. He was a contemporary with St. Ignatius when bishop of that see, and circulated his opinions among his flock. He maintained that the world was made by the father, with the aid of seven angels, who also made man, and that the God of the Jews was one of those angels. That the angels formed two races of men at that time, the one good, and the other wicked; which latter were assisted by demons in their evil deeds, and that they married and generated with Satan, and it was these demons whom Christ was sent to destroy. That he came invisible, and without a body, yet seemed a human figure in the eyes of mankind.† This sect are not so notorious as their predecessors or contemporaries for flagitious practices. They are not reprobated by St. Ignatius, though

* Cloaca omnium impuritatum.

† Irenæus, l. i. c. 22.

they lived in his time and city. They considered self denial a virtue, abstained from animal food, and from an appearance of virtue and moderation seduced many to adopt their extravagant notions.

To Saturninus succeeded Carpocrates, whose opinions and practices were so wild and flagitious, that a writer detailing them says, his mind shudders at the recital as altogether unfit for Christian ears, for their portentous and horrible turpitude.* He was born at Alexandria and like Basilides, engrafted his Christianity on the monstrous follies of Egypt. He too affirmed that the world was made not by God, but by angels. He admitted however, that Christ was the son of Joseph, born like other men, and distinguished for his probity; but affirmed that he himself and his followers resembled him in all things, and were more powerful, inasmuch as they had demons bound and subject to their art, to perform whatever task they assigned them. He applied several texts of scripture to an extraordinary purpose, particularly that of St. Mathew, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art on the way, lest he deliver thee

* Ob turpitudinem portentosam nimium et horribilem. Baron. Ec. Hist., tom. 1.

to the judge.”* This he interpreted to mean an injunction, not to oppose but to comply with all the desires and passions of our nature. He taught the transmigration of the soul, and affirmed, that those who resisted their desires would be punished in passing from one body to another; but those who obeyed them, would pass immediately beyond the angels to God the father.† The practices of the sect were correspondent to this dogma, if we are to believe the contemporary and other early writers who describe them, particularly Epiphanius; he says, “shall I blush only to tell what they do not blush to do?”‡ and accordingly he details minutely a series of ceremonies and actions, so singularly foul and flagitious, that it requires no small effort of our belief, to assent to the possibility, that any state of the human mind could be so depraved as to devise or adopt them. I shall notice but one as a specimen, and that the least impure and revolting;—they took a foetus, and having pounded it in a mortar, and mixed spice with it, the com-

* Mat. chap. v. verse 25.

† Irenæus lib. i. chap. 4.

‡ Ὅμοις οὐκ ἀισχυρόν λέγειν ὅτι ἄνθρωποι οὐκ ἀισχυνεται; Epiphanius. Hæres. 26.

pany and their dogs fed on the mass, calling it a paschal feast.

Carpocrates left a son called Epipheus who adopted his father's opinions, and held particularly the tenet, that all women should be alike accessible to all men. He seems to have acquired no small reputation; for his mother who was a Cephaloniote, caused a temple to be erected in her native island to her son; in which he was worshipped and had divine honours paid to him, as a new deity. His votaries met at the full of the moon to offer sacrifices to him, on an altar raised for the purpose.*

In the reign of Antoninus Pius, about the year 145 of the Christian æra, lived Valentinus. He was a native of Phœbos, a maritime town in Egypt, was well skilled in Greek and Roman Literature, and became a philosopher of the Platonic school. He afterwards embraced Christianity, and became a preacher both in the Greek and Latin churches. He had hoped to obtain a bishopric, which he thought his knowledge and his eloquence entitled him to aspire to; but he was disappointed, and hence he adopted, and spread new and strange opinions, to ensure that celebrity, which as an orthodox

* Clem. Alex. 1. 3.

preacher he could not hope to procure.* He brought with him all the fancies of the poets and philosophers of the Grecian school, and mixed them up with the doctrines of his new religion, such as he found it in the gospel of St. John, which alone he read and adopted. He held that there were thirty Gods, one half of which were male and the other female, from whose intercourse many were generated. These deities he called *Æons*, and from them the saviour of the world was formed and perfected, with all good gifts like the Pandora of Hesiod.† He admitted he was born of an earthly virgin, but affirmed that he derived nothing from her, having merely passed directly from God, through a mortal body, as through a canal, bringing with him from heaven the very flesh in which he was clothed;‡ yet he denied the resurrection of that same flesh, asserting that another was formed for the same purpose, from another substance. He divided the human race into three classes, spiritual, animal, and carnal; the first was already perfect, and to this class he and his disciples belonged, and were saved both body and

* Tertul. Contr. Valent. cap. 3. † Epiph. Hæres, 3.

‡ Tertul. Advers. Val. c. 27.

soul. The second required abstinence, martyrdom, and other sufferings from which his followers were exempt, to arrive at the first state; they then could save their souls which were married to angels, but their bodies perished. The third class was in a hopeless situation, and could not by any meritorious exertion or good works emerge from it, or obtain salvation for themselves. The practices of the Valentinians were conformable to the professions of men who held themselves exempt from the performance of any good work. They said they rendered to each part of the human being its proper attribute; to spirit, spiritual; to the flesh, fleshly things. They therefore indulged in all carnal inclinations without restraint, eating idol-offerings, and partaking of other feasts of Gentile worship; withdrawing wives from their husbands, and living with women as their sisters, till their pregnancy betrayed the illicit intercourse, and declaring what was sinful in others, was to them harmless. "Thus," said Irenæus, "they consider us, who fear to offend God even in word or thought, as idiots, and without knowledge; but themselves, committing every odious and irreligious act, they esteem perfect

and the seeds of election.”* Contrary to the universal usage of the early Christian church, which was accessible to all, and its ceremonies practised in the open day, the Valentinians sought to cover their rites with concealment, like the Eleusinian mysteries; they were performed in an interior room, in profound silence, with many doors and veils interposed between them and the public.† Valentinus, like Basilides, composed a gospel, containing circumstances of the infancy of Christ, and collecting a number of apochryphal translations, which sustained his own opinions. He also wrote epistles and psalms, with commentaries, which he called “wisdom;” in these, he affirmed that he was wiser not only than the Presbyters of the church, but than the apostles themselves; for that they mixed up things of the law with the words of Christ; but that he alone knew the pure uncorrupted and hidden mystery.‡

• “Ἄλλα δὲ πολλὰ μυστα καὶ ἀθεὰ πρᾶσσοντες ἡμῶν μὲν διὰ τὸν φόβον τοῦ Θεοῦ φυλασσομένων καὶ μέχρις ἐννοίας καὶ λόγου ἁμαρτανεῖν κατατρέχειν, ὥς ἰδιωτῶν, καὶ μηδὲν ἔπισκευμένων· ἑαυτοὺς δὲ ὑπερβόουσι, τελειοῦς ἀποκαλοῦντες καὶ σπέρματα ἐκλογῆς.—Iren. L. I. c. 1.

† Tertul. adv. Val. c. 1.

‡ Irenæus, lib. iii. c. 2. Tertul. de præs. c. 49.

From the school of Valentinus rose Euphrates, who founded the sect of the *Ophites*. They held that wisdom was embodied in the serpent; that that wisdom was Christ, who tempted Eve with the knowledge of good and evil; and that so knowledge was communicated to man. They professed to hold in detestation the God of the Jews, who, they said, envied the human race. They not only worshipped the serpent in the abstract, but for the celebration of their rites they nourished a large one; and having erected an altar over its den, they induced it by the presentation of such things as it was fond of, to issue from its cavern, and glide over the altar, licking and tasting the food; then rolling itself about the offering of bread, it broke it in pieces, and presented with its mouth portions of it to the bystanders, who used it as elements in the Eucharist; offered, as they affirmed by Christ, who had assumed the form of a serpent for that purpose. They then saluted him by kissing his mouth, and he retired to his concealment.* This serpent-worship was not confined to sectaries of the Christian church. Alexander, a disciple of the school of Apollonius Tyanæus, about the same period, ex-

* Augustin de Hæres. Epiphanius Hæres. 37.

posed a serpent for public adoration ; affirming that he was the soul of Esculapius, who, by the prophecies of the Sybilline books, was again to appear in Bythinia. His fame and profit were immense in several countries of the east.* It was thus that Pagan, and Christian, labouring under the same aberrations of the human mind, adopted the same impious extravagancies, and the purity of the Gospel was mixed up and polluted by the most debasing Gentile practices.

That nothing might be wanting in this early age to complete the dismal picture of the folly and depravity of the human mind, and perverse abuse of the sacred Scriptures ; there were at this time many sects who adopted for their appellations the names of persons mentioned in the Bible, some of whom were only notorious for their wickedness, and some for the extravagant follies they furnished those men with a pretext for practising. Prodicus, of the family of Carpocrates, founded the sect of the Adamites. Their churches are represented as brothels, where they resorted naked. They affirmed that they thus restored man to his primitive inno-

* Lucian, noticing this sect, says, that the impious, the Christian, and the Epicuræan, were excluded from its mysteries. Lucian pseudomant.

cence and simplicity, and that when they assembled together, they should meet in the same state as Adam and Eve in Paradise. They held, as doctrine, that the four elements were gods, and next in power to the sun and moon. Another sect, called themselves Cainites, from their veneration for the character of Cain. They asserted that he was the offspring of a more powerful efficacy, and therefore subdued Abel, who was derived from a more weak and feeble origin. Others took the name of Judas Iscariot, and professed to hold his character in the highest respect. They alleged that Christ wished to subvert the truth, and it was therefore that he was given up by Judas to condign punishment.† Lastly, a sect of Sodomites was established on the same authority, who respected the opinions, and adopted the practises of those scriptural persons. Indeed it should appear, that to invert the ordinary notions of right and wrong, and so allow a latitude to the most depraved inclinations, was the end of those sectarians; and to invent any thing that would confound the received opinions of good and evil, and pollute the sacred source from whence they

* Epiphanius Hæres. 52. Tertul. de Præ. c. 47.

† Ibid.

were derived, was sufficient to establish a new sect, however impious in profession, or flagitious in practice. The opinions and actions of all those sectarians are so abhorrent from the general reason and feeling of mankind, that we should be inclined to doubt all the accounts of them, were they not handed down to us by contemporaries, of unimpeachable veracity; who had ample means of information; who are above the suspicion of intending to deceive others; and who could not be deceived themselves. They were eye-witnesses; and ear witnesses, and therefore they only detail what they themselves saw and heard.*

It would not accord with the design, or intended extent of this essay, to enter into more minute details of the shades of opinion which marked the varieties of these sects, or to enumerate all the persons who promulgated them. Besides those already mentioned, Choerinthus,

* Epiphanius acknowledges himself to have been a Gnostic in early life, seduced, as he says with great candour and simplicity, by some women. *Ταύτη γὰρ τῇ αἵρεσὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περιετυχὼν γυναῖκες ἀθύροτατῇ τὸλμῃ κατασπασαὶ ἡμᾶς ἐν τῇ νεᾷ ἡμῶν ἡλικίᾳ ὀρεχθεῖσαι ἐπιχερουν.* Lib. I. tom 2. c. 17. Jortin accuses Epiphanius of a propensity to scandal; but it is not to be believed that he would misrepresent wilfully what he had thus the means *himself* of seeing and hearing.

Cerdon, Marcian, and others, were famous, and the instruments, particularly the latter, of extending those extravagant opinions from Asia, and Africa, into Europe. Italy, and the western parts of the empire, had hitherto been infested with few heretical doctrines; it was in the east only, the pregnant parent of every monstrous and absurd imagination, they originated; and to the congenial minds of the people they were confined; but in the year 167, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, certain of these sectaries, availing themselves of the pretext of persecutions then carried on, came from Pontus, Egypt, and the eastern provinces, and obtruded themselves among the Christians at Rome. With these came Marcian Ponticus, and Cerdon. They were powerfully assisted by a woman named Marcellina, who, by her influence and artifice, spread abroad the opinions of the sect, and gained so many proselytes, that they no longer covered their mysteries with a veil, but openly professed and taught their doctrines.* St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who happened at this time to be at Rome, recognised personally these men, and exposed their flagitious

* *Necdum secretum facinus sub corde reclusum*

Passim vulgo loquentes.

Tertul. lib. iii.

practices, with which he was well acquainted.* By his exhortation and reproof, many were reclaimed from the errors they inculcated, and even the leaders themselves requested to be admitted again into the church, from whence they had been excommunicated. Notwithstanding this temporary semblance of contrition, they still continued to maintain and propagate their doctrines, and were unfortunately so successful, that multitudes of the orthodox ecclesiastics themselves were infected ; and the Gentiles made no distinction between those who had embraced them, and those who had not ; but included the whole Christian community in the censure, and reprobation which justly attached to these sectarians, who had now expanded themselves beyond the provincial limits to which they were at first confined ; and mingled with, and tainted every Christian community wherever the Gospel had extended itself.

Whatever were the shades of difference by which they were distinguished from each other, as taught by a particular leader, there were certain general dogmata in which all the sects seemed to agree : they looked upon all other Christians, who interpreted the Scriptures in their

* Eusebius from Irenæus, lib. iv. c. 13.

plain and obvious sense, as simple, and weak ; and affirmed, that they alone were capable of comprehending the true and occult meaning. Hence they denominated themselves, exclusively, Gnostics, as being the only Christians who had attained to true knowledge.* They generally founded their interpretation of Scripture on the opinions of Plato and Pythagoras, distorted by Egyptian and Asiatic fancies. They imagined that the rational soul was imprisoned in corrupt matter, contrary to the Supreme will : they expected from the general impressions left by the prophetic writings of the east, and from the supposed necessity of the circumstance, that God would send some person into the world to liberate the soul from this bondage, and instruct mankind more fully in the knowledge of his dealing with human nature, and that Christ was that person : that when he came he did deliver mankind from the power of evil genii, or spirits, to which the world was subject, as well as the soul from the dominion of corrupt matter ; and they interpreted all the parts of Scripture, so as to accord with these notions. They hated the Jews and the books of Moses, because they opposed their favourite

* A γνῶσις, scientia, knowledge. Irenæus. Hæres. c. 24.

opinion that the world was made by inferior angels. They taught that all evil resolved itself into matter; they therefore treated the body with contempt, and denied its resurrection or reunion with the soul after its separation. They discouraged marriage, as a connexion of minds polluted by carnal feelings; and they partook of sensual pleasures, with the grossest and most unrestrained indulgence, because they divested it of all sentiment or mental association. But their most remarkable tenet was that malevolent spirits ruled the world, presided over all nature, and caused diseases and human sufferings; but that by knowledge and science, these spirits could be controlled, their power suspended, and even their malevolence rendered subservient to the use and service of man. This science they thought they had themselves exclusively attained, and that it principally consisted in the efficacy of numbers, and certain mysterious hieroglyphics adopted from the Egyptians. Hence they made systems of monads, triads, and decads; and formed figures of Anubis, Serapis, and other idols. This composition of certain abstruse words and mysterious figures, was engraved on gems and stones of different kinds and qualities; and they af-

firmed that whoever bore one of these on his person, was secured by it from the particular evil it was made to guard against. These images and figures of different materials are mentioned by Irenæus, and some of the mysterious words engraven on them are described and explained by contemporary historians.* They were called Amulets from their supposed efficacy in allaying evil.† Amulets, against disease, were formed of materials, having an imaginary connection with the distemper; red against all morbid affections of a fiery or febrile character, chrystal or glass against those that were watery or dropsical, and so of others. The immense number and variety of these Talismans that have been, and are still found in many places very remote from each other, at once attest the accuracy of the ecclesiastical historians who have described these sects and their opinions, and the great encouragement and reception those opinions met with in different parts of the world. They are found not

* Irenæus, Hæres. c. 24. Hieron. c. iii. 1.

† Amuletum quod malum amolitur. Some derive it from *amula*, a small vessel of lustral water, carried about by the Romans. It is a term used by Pliny; and the practice of many such things was universal, not only among the Greeks and Romans, but the Egyptians and Orientals.

only in the east where travellers procure them without much difficulty; but in the west they are continually dug up on the banks of the Rhine and Garonne, and in different parts of Spain, Italy, and other western counties, where Marcian and the founders and followers of the Gnostic sects, distributed them; proving, as Montfaucon justly observes, that no superstition was more widely spread or universally adopted, and affording a hope that by their means the more secret mysteries of those sectarians may be elucidated.*

To appreciate duly the extent of this sect and their perverse fecundity of invention, it will be only necessary to mention that Montfaucon alone has given three hundred facsimiles of gems, with different devices and inscriptions. Those that I propose to exhibit are not to be found either in Montfaucon, or Kircher, or any other writer whom I have consulted; though many have that resemblance

* *Nulla unquam superstitio latius manavit, ut ex ingenti numero lapillorum hujusmodi, qui quotidie eruuntur, arguere licet. Hæc superstitio latè pervagata est per Gallias, Hispaniam, Italiam, cæterasque Europæ regiones. Tot tantaque hujusmodi indies ex tenebris eruuntur, ut sperandum sit fore ut eorum adminiculis Hæreticorum veterum secretiora mysteria revelentur.—Montfaucon, Supplem. tom. ii. ant. explan.*

which at once establishes their similar origin. It is to be presumed, therefore, that they are new discoveries, and now, for the first time, published. Many that are equally curious I have, with reluctance, rejected, not being able to ascertain that they belonged to the Gnostic heretics; though the singular combination of emblematic devices indicated that they were the invention of some other sect equally mysterious and extraordinary.

In order that a clear view may be had of the subject, I shall endeavour to accompany each fac-simile with a reference of its device to the practices and opinions of the sect to which it is supposed to belong: I regret that, notwithstanding the anticipation of Montfaucon, so much yet remains to be explained. I have hardly presumed on any conjecture myself, where it has not been founded upon the already published opinions of learned men; where they are silent, or have declared their inability to elucidate an inscription or an emblem, I have scarcely ventured to attempt it.

The first Gem here exhibited is in the collection of Viscount Strangford. It is a beautiful chrysophrase, and the execution of the sculpture superior to that found on most others,

which is, in general, very rude, indicating a great decline of the arts, or great inexperience in the particular artist. It is of an oval form, convex on both sides, and both the surface of the stone and the impressions of the sculpture, highly polished.—No. 2.

On one side is represented a right line crossed by three curved ones, a figure very common on Gnostic gems, but its meaning has not been ascertained. This is surrounded by the legend ABPACAΞ IΑΩ words also of very common use, and which are to be found either by themselves, or accompanied by every variety of figure, but most particularly from those that have rays issuing from the head. The word Abrasax, sometimes spelled Abraxas, with a slight transposition of the letters, was the great mystery of the Gnostics, and has been noticed and expounded by most of the contemporary Christian writers. Without quoting the particular passages from each, I shall give the substance of what they have all said on the subject. The supreme deity and omnipotent god of the Gnostics was the Abrasax, which contained within it the mystic number, 365. He it was that created the ΝῆC or intellectual mind, from whence proceeded the ΛΟΡΟC or word: from

the word emanated providence ; from providence, virtue and wisdom ; and from these principalities, powers and angels, who finally created the 365 heavens. The least of all these was the Jehovah, or God of the Jews, the deity of the law and the prophets, whom they reject as a supreme divinity, but admit as a creating angel. Abrasax was the same as Meithras, the sun of the Gentiles ; both their names in Greek characters, representing the same number 365, the annual solar circle, and the deity of the sun himself. The mysteries of Meithras were accompanied by Christian ceremonies. The novice was initiated by the rite of baptism, pouring water and making a sign on the forehead, and so it was considered an ablution which purified and cleansed from sin ; he then partook of the eucharist of bread and wine.* They adored Christ under the form of the sun, which Meithras signifies and considered, that the visible material luminary was himself. The identity of Abrasax and Meithras is evinced in the following table :—

* Irenæus, lib. i. c. 24. Tertul. de Præscr. Hieron. Com. in Amos. August, vol. viii. p. 6. Justin Martyr, Apol. pro. Christ. 2.

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| A 1 | M 40 |
| B 2 | E 5 |
| P 100 | I 10 |
| A 1 | Θ 9 |
| C 200 | P 100 |
| A 1 | A 1 |
| Ξ 60 | C 200 |
| <hr/> | |
| 365 | 365 |

The word ΙΑΩ, in a variety of modifications, is also found on most of the gems of the Gnostics; and next to Abrasax, seems to have been the most portentous and mysterious. It is generally supposed to be a corruption of the tetragrammaton יהוה , or Jehovah, that name of four letters to which the Jews attached so awful an importance, and in which Christians have discerned the elements of the trinity. I shall venture, however, to suggest another meaning. Irenæus gives the following form of initiation into the mysteries of the sect:—"Some," said he, "express their redemption, and introduce the secret name which Jesus of Nazareth assumed, in this manner, 'Messia ouraphen namempsaiman Chaldaian motomedaëa akphraina psaioua Jesou Nazaria,' the interpretation of which is, 'I do not separate the spirit, the heart,

the super-celestial and compassionate power. I will enjoy thy name, Saviour of truth.' When the initiators have thus spoken, the initiated replies, 'I have been confirmed, and I redeem my soul from this Æon, and from all that shall proceed from it in the name of ΙΑΩ.'"* Here seems a strong affirmation of, and allusion to the name, by which the divine character of Christ was expressed; as if the ΑΩ was intended to be the alpha and omega of the Revelations, and the characters ΙΑΩ stood for Jesus the "Redeemer, the first and the last." An interpretation so orthodox, some of the early fathers, or the later ecclesiastical writers who represent these sectarians, and justly, perhaps, in such odious colours, would not be disposed to admit; yet I see no reason why they might not on this occasion as

* I subjoin the original of this curious passage: ἄλλοι δὲ παλὶν τὴν λυτρώσιν ἐπιλεγούσιν οὕτως, τό ὄνομα τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ὃ ἐνεδυσάτο Ἰησοῦς Ναζαρένος ὄνομα τό τῆς καταστάσεως· μεσσία οὐραφεν ναμεμφαιμεν χαλδαιαν μοτο μεδαῆα ακφραιναι ψαιουα Ἰησου Ναζαρεα· καί τουτῶν δε ἑρμηνεία ἔστι ταῦτη οὐ διαίρῳ το πνεῦμα, την καρδιαν, και τήν ὑπερ ουρανιον δύναμιν τήν οἰκτιρμονα· ὄναιμεν τοῦ ὀνουατος σου σωτήρ ἀληθεῖας. Καί ταῦτα μέν ἐπιλεγούσιν οἱ αὐτοὶ τελούντες· ὅδε τετελεσμένος ἀποκρινέται. Ἐξηριγμαὶ καὶ λελυτρώμαι τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἀπο τοῦ αἰωνος τουτου καὶ παντῶν τῶν παρ' αὐτου ἐν τῇ ονοματί του ΙΑΩ.—Iren. lib. II. c. 13.

they did on others, mix up some truth with much falsehood. The interpretation is countenanced by the circumstance, that the first Christian Byzantine emperors, a little after, placed the *ΑΩ* on their coins, in characters exactly formed after the letters of the gems, and in the same sense as I have ventured to give them.

In a gem given by Kircher, with the similar figure of a serpent accompanying the legend, is the word *ΧΝΘΥΜΙCΠΙ*, which he affirms is a name for Christ, indicating it by the same equivalent characters in numbers, as *ΑΒΡΑCΑΕ* indicated God.*

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|-------|---|---|---|------|
| X | . | . | 600 | X | . | . | 600 |
| N | . | . | 50 | P | . | . | 100 |
| O | . | . | 70 | I | . | . | 10 |
| T | . | . | 400 | C | . | . | 200 |
| M | . | . | 40 | T | . | . | 300 |
| I | . | . | 10 | O | . | . | 70 |
| C | . | . | 200 | C | . | . | 200 |
| P | . | . | 100 | | | | — |
| I | . | . | 10 | | | | 1480 |
| | | | <hr/> | | | | |
| | | | 1480 | | | | |

The recognition of the Saviour by numeral transposition is another presumption that it was

* Kircher, *Magia. Hieroglyph. tom. ii. cap. vii. class. xvi. p. 469.*

done so by less occult characters ; and the assimilation of these sectarians in some instances to the pure spirit of Christianity, might have been among the principal causes, why the whole of the Christian church was at this time identified with them, and suffered the obloquy attached to their character, and the punishment due to their offences.

On the other face of this gem is represented a serpent, coiled into a knot, surmounted with a lion's head and mane, having rays issuing from the head. The serpent was universally adopted, not only by the Greek and Roman, but by the oriental and Egyptian Gentiles. By the first it was consecrated to Esculapius, who was worshipped at Epidaurus under that form ;* and on sundry coins and sculptured remains, the serpent is seen twining round a staff, with a legend ΣΩΤΗΡ, or the Saviour ; by the latter it was one of the numerous emblems to represent the sun, and it was called ΑΓΑΘΟΔΑΙΜΩΝ, or the good genius. Ælius Lampridius, in speaking of the Emperor Heliogabalus, says, that " he kept at Rome serpents, that were called their good demons by the Egyptians."†

* Pliny, lib. xxix. c. 4. Pausanius, lib. 2. c. 28.

† *Egyptios Dracones Romæ habuit quos illi Agathodæmones vocant.*

Hence this reptile was adopted by the Gnostics : one of their sects is known to have worshipped it, and to have been called *Ophites* from the name of their deity, as we have already seen ; and it is to be found in every form and modification on their gems, either by itself, or attached to other bodies ; and the members of other bodies frequently attached to it. Here we see the head of a lion. The lion was the emblem of the tribe of Judah, conferred upon him by his father, and indicated that strength and superiority which Jacob had predicted should be attached to it.* The Jews also in the superstitious Cabala found many reasons why Adam imposed the name אריה, arieh, on that animal, which resolves itself into a number of terrific properties which characterize it.† The Gnostics adopted it therefore as a mystic emblem, and represented under its form Christ, the rays issuing from its head indicating his divinity. Thus, then, in this first gem, appear to be combined the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, mixed up and confounded with the absurd and extravagant fictions of heathen superstition.

* Gen. cap. xl. ix. ver. 8, 9.

† Kircher, Œdip. Egypt. tom. ii. class. ii. cap. 2. p. 57.

The indentification of Christ with the serpent seems to be evident from the gem which follows. The Ophites were known to maintain, that the person of one was embodied in that of the other ; and they even preferred the serpentine form, because, as they asserted, he had the knowledge of good and evil.* That it was in virtue of this prerogative, Moses set up the brazen serpent, in order that all who looked on it might recover their health ; and that Christ merely imitated this power, when he said that as Moses lifted up the serpent, so should the son of man be exalted. The sculpture on the gem seems to represent this. On one face are serpents twining round posts fixed in the ground, intimating the brazen one erected by Moses ; between them is a cup of health or salvation, out of which they are stretching to drink, accompanied by two stars, usual emblems of divinity on the coins of that period : behind are serpents in the form of bows. On the other face are two large serpents at each end, including between them two naked figures on horseback, having crowns ; one trampling on a dead body, and the other beside one, apparently expostulating with him : between is the figure of a

* Theodoret. Hæres. Fab. lib. i. Tertul. de præs. cap. 47.

man on his knees, and behind are guards ; above are emblems of the sun and moon, accompanied by stars. The allusion of all this to the sanative effects of the serpent raised in the wilderness ; death and the other figure on horseback, the crown, the bow, the dead, the sun, moon, and falling stars mentioned in Exodus and Revelation,* are so striking as not to be mistaken ; while the dog, the beetle, the ibis, and other Egyptian emblems, afford a curious display of that mysterious mixture of Christianity and Heathenism in which those sectarians delighted. In the gem which follows is also the figure of a serpent having the legend ΙΑΩ CABAΩ, for sabaoth, round it ; and on the other face the word ΜΟΡΧ, for Moses, which confirms the allusion of the former.†—No. 3. 4.

Sometimes the serpent was placed by itself, unaccompanied by any other emblematical figure. It is then generally represented, either as a circle, or an ellipse, holding its tail in its mouth. This appears to have been the common emblem of eternity, as having no end ; and also

* Numbers, ch. xxi. Rev. ch. vi.

† Montfaucon, *Antiq. Expli.* tom. ii. part ii. plate clvi. These Gems alone I have borrowed from Montfaucon to illustrate the former.

the Egyptian representation of the solar circle, the year revolving into itself. The one here exhibited is in the collection of Viscount Strangford ; it is made of an agate, of the size represented in the fac-simile, and unusually large. On one face is a serpent forming a ring, and containing inside it a long inscription surrounded by mysterious characters. The inscription consists entirely of vowels, among which the word *IAΩ* appears in various transpositions. On the other face are similar strange characters, of a very occult and barbarous appearance, surrounding also an inscription of vowels, involved and mixed together ; the whole encircled, not by a serpent, but by a ring of letters. This gem is remarkably and satisfactorily illustrated by a passage of Irenæus. The vowels were held in high estimation by the Gnostics ; their number seven they imagined had the powers of the seven virtues in animating the world, and was the soul of all we see, and represented the seven celestial abodes. The first heaven emits the sound of A, the next of E, the third of H, the fourth and midst of the seven heavens enunciated the letter I, the fifth O, the sixth T, and the seventh and fourth from the centre proclaims the letter Ω. But when these powers are *involved and mixed*

*together, they resound and glorify him by whom they were projected ;** and the glory of the sound is sent to the original father, and then borne to the earth to become that which moulds and produces every thing upon it." It should appear from this strange and mystic passage, that an amulet so constructed with the seven vowels mingled together, had a mysterious power of extraordinary efficacy. There is none of this structure at all noticed either in Kircher or Montfaucon.—No. 5.

The next class is that where the serpent forms a part of some other figure. The facsimile here given represents it as forming the legs of a human body, surmounted with a cock's head. The gem from which it is copied, is a blood-stone in the collection of Viscount Strangford, who has others of the same kind ; and indeed it so frequently occurs as a Gnostic emblem, that it seems to have been considered as a representation of the God of the Christians, and as we shall see was placed on the coins of the Roman emperors as the image of Christianity. The cock in Greek and Roman mythology was the

* "Ἀστὶνὲς δυνάμει; θεοῦ φῆσι πάσαι ἵε; ἅλληλα; συμπλακίσαι, ηἰχουσι καὶ δοξαζουσιν ἐκείνον ὑφ' οὗ προεβλήθησαν, κ. τ. α.—Iren. lib. i. cap. x. sect. x.

bird sacred to the sun and moon, and this opinion was introduced by Pythagoras who had studied for twenty years in Egypt, and learned the mysteries of the priests. In the fourteenth symbol he directs that the cock should be nourished, not sacrificed, for it was sacred to the sun and moon. The vigilance and announcement of the approach of the sun by this bird, intimated a connection, and the comb and gills suggested a fanciful resemblance of rays issuing from the head. In one hand he holds a scourge as urging on the steeds, and in the other a shield as representing the disk. The cock was also dedicated to Mars, and in some Gems the head is surmounted by that warrior issuing from it, indicating that he was the deity intended. These figures are accompanied by a variety of legends, sometimes the names of the seven angels who were supposed to have created the world, and sometimes IAΩAHA, which is interpreted "the angel of the Lord." In the Gem here exhibited the mystic word IAΩ is seen between the serpent-like feet. On the opposite face are the seven vowels, forming the elements of a figure which obtained great celebrity for its supposed efficacy. By dropping a letter in each succeeding word, at very repetition of the vowels, an equilateral

triangle or cone is formed, to which they annexed potent medical virtues. This secret the Gnostics wrapped up in the letters of their inscription; but Quintus Serenus Samonicus, a learned physician of the school of Basilides, was more explicit.* He constructed from it his celebrated Amulet of Abracadabra against Tertian Ague, and gives directions for forming it by abstracting a letter from every line,

Donec in augustum redigatur litera conum.

The elements of this abracadabra I have only met on the Gem here given, nor is it to be found in Montfaucon, Kircher, or any other writer whom I have consulted.—No. 5.†

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| A E H I O Y W | A B P A C A D A B P A |
| E H I O Y W | B P A C A D A B P A |
| H I O Y W | P A C A D A B P A |
| I O Y W | A C A D A B P A |
| O Y W | C A D A B P A |
| Y W | A D A B P A |
| W | D A B P A |
| | A B P A |
| | B P A |
| | P A |
| | A |

A second figure of this kind, also in the col-

* Serenus Samonicus lived in the reign of Gordian, and was tutor to Gordian junior. He was killed along with many others in a bath. He has left sundry directions for using these Gems.

† By an oversight of the engraver there are two numbers 5.

lection of Viscount Strangford, is here exhibited ; it is sculptured on a blood stone. Instead of a shield it holds in its left hand a serpent, and instead of the IAΩ between the feet, there is suspended a triangle and a circle, in each of which many mystic allusions were enclosed. By the triangle, in general, the triple emanation of the Deity was indicated ; by the equilateral his process through the corporeal world ; by the Isocles through the starry ; and by the Scalenum with unequal sides, the various elementary mutations. By the circle was expressed the simple undivided nature of God, in which all things were included and identified ; and it was held a most sacred emblem for its various extraordinary properties, both by Greeks and Egyptians, and hence adopted by the Gnostics. Round the figure is the imperfect legend HHHMR . The letters H are supposed, by Scaliger, to be a repetition of the correspondent Hebrew ה , and a contraction of the tetragrammaton יהוה , or name for Jehovah,* and the letters MR for ΜΕΓΑΣ , and so the inscription would imply “ the great God.” On the opposite face are the letters

for medical purposes, tying them with catskin, and mixing the colours—

*Coralium atq : crocum corio connectite felis,
Ne dubites illic virides miscere smaragdo.*

• Scaliger, Epist. ad Vazet.

COYMAPTA CMAPBACKAPBA, and other characters, which are very rude and imperfect. The first word formed is soumarta, which frequently occurs, and is supposed to be the name of one of the 365 angels in Gnostic mythology. In the others, it seems joined to the abrasax, transposed and twice repeated.—No. 6.

I shall mention another of this device, rendered still more curious from the circumstances connected with it, which were communicated to me by Colonel Belford, in whose possession the Gem now is, and who had it from his father. Immediately after the battle of Culloden, the baggage of Prince Charles Edward fell into the hands of the Duke of Cumberland's army, and many private and curious articles in his cabinet came into the possession of the late General Belford, who took it. Among the rest was a stone set in silver attached to a ring which proved to be a Gnostic amulet. It is highly probable that the superstitious prince had obtained it on the continent, as a charm, and carried it as a protection in the hazardous enterprise in which he was engaged. It is a ruby blood-stone: on one face is the figure represented on the former, having the serpentine feet turned both to the same side as the shield, and the whole form evidently threatening hostility,

a position and expression which is very unusual, and which occurs but once in fac-similes of Kircher and Montfaucon. In this attitude of offence it represented, not the sun, but Mars; and so seems an appropriate emblem for the occasion on which it was used. Beside the figure is the inscription $\text{IA}\omega$. On the other face is a female naked figure, probably Isis, with the inscription ATI TA .—No. 7.

The next belongs to that class called *σφακομορφοι*, or those with hawks' heads. The hawk, according to Eusebius, was another emblem of the sun; and the Egyptian deity, Osiris, is often represented with the head of that bird. Among the Gnostic remains it was placed on a variety of figures. Here it is set on a man, with wings, and from the inscription he appears to be intended for an angel; and that angel Michael, having the legend MIXAHA over his head. He holds in his hands two implements, which have the forms of triangles, similar to one held in the hand of Isis, in the Egyptian planetarium, where she is represented as the earth. On the opposite face are the words $\Delta\text{VNAME MIXAHA}$, "the might or power of Michael." These circumstances seem to allude to the extraordinary powers and functions conferred on angels by the different Gnostic sects, from Simon Magus

downwards. They all held, as we have seen, that angels were the fabricators or architects of the universe, and Cherinthus affirmed they were superior to Christ himself; and this opinion was so early entertained, that the apostle Paul thought it necessary to warn the Colossians against the seductions of those who "came in the religion of the angels,"* boasting, as Tertulian says, "that the angels were the artificers of nature."† They further said, as Theodoret affirms, that the law was given by them, and no one had access to God except through them.‡ Hence we find, on the Gnostic gems, the names of numbers of their angels. On one are those of Michaël, Gabriel, Uriel, Raphaël, Ananaël, Prosoraël, and Chabsaël, who, according to the Egyptians, governed the seven days in the week, and the seven planets; and who, according to Saturninus, were the seven angels who made the world, and governed it each in succession for three hundred years. Besides those names which are found in Scripture, they invented a multitude of others which are also met with on their gems. But the chief and most highly venerated was Michaël, the archangel; inso-

* Epist. to Coloss. ch. x. ver. 18.

† Tertul. de Præc. c. 48. ‡ Theod. Ep. ad. Col.

much so, that Oratories were erected to him in Asia Minor, where divine honours were paid to him. Nor was it confined to him alone, but some of the ancient churches at this day attest the high respect paid to angels. In the city of Nicæa, the only remaining edifice of that formerly magnificent town, is a very ancient Christian church. It appeared to me from an inscription in the Narthex, to have been repaired by Constantine when he held there the celebrated council. The outside is still more recent, and fitted up in a modern way ; but the body of the church, particularly the roof, bears marks of great antiquity. The ceiling is arched, and covered with figures in Mosaic, among which are many angels, distinguished by the inscriptions ΕΘΟΥΚΙΕΚΤΡΙΟΤΕΤΕC ΑΡΧΕΑΤΝΑΜΙC. The last appellation no doubt had the same reference as the ΑΤΝΑΜΙC ΜΙΧΑΗΛ of the Gem.—No. 8.

The Gem which follows belongs to the class of *κυνιομορφος*, or those with dog's heads. It is in the collection of Viscount Strangford. The stone is basalt, and smaller than usual. It represents figures on both faces, which very frequently occur on the Gnostic remains. The first is the Egyptian deity, Anubis, who was

worshipped with a dog's head in a variety of forms, and his name inscribed on a number of different figures, which have no apparent connection with a dog. He was the keeper of the temples, and the guardian of the great principles of heat, humidity, and fœcundity. He was sometimes designated by the symbol of Capricornus, whose goat's horns represented the rays of heat, and whose fishy tail implied moisture. In an ancient sculpture given by Montfaucon, he is depicted with his foot on a crocodile, surmounted with a star; intimating his connection with the Nile, and with the constellation of Sirius. He was therefore considered as the symbol of the Nile's fertility, which begins to swell when the dog-star rises. He was also supposed to keep guard at the tropics, and to prevent the sun from passing beyond them. His worship was so celebrated, that a city was built in Egypt, and dedicated to his divinity, and called after him Cynopolis. Nor was his worship confined to that country: he was considered by the Greeks and Romans the same as Mercury, and is therefore called by Plutarch Hermanubis. He is for this reason represented with the symbols, and as performing the functions of Mercury, holding a caduceus,

and leading souls to hell ; and so he is described by Apuleus.* All these circumstances are recognized and exhibited on various Gems of the Gnostics. In the annexed, he stands without any symbol of Mercury, and is purely the Egyptian god. The inscription is scarcely legible ; but it is easy to discern the words ΕΤΜΕΡ ΙΑΑΜΥΙ, a corruption of Hebrew and Greek, which signifies the sun or star, has shone ; alluding probably to his identity with Syrius, though in general there seems to be but little connection between any legend and the figure to which it is annexed.

On the opposite face of this stone is the figure of a female, with her finger on her lips. Among the Egyptians it was deemed impossible to worship the deity in a worthy manner by words, adopting the sentiments of Plato—that it was difficult to find the nature of the Maker and Father of the universe, or to convey an idea of him to the people by a verbal description ;† and they imagined, therefore, the deity Harpocrates, who presided over silence, and was always represented as inculcating it by holding his finger

* Ille Superùm Commeator et Inferùm sublimis attollens cervices arduas Anubis, lævâ Caduceum gerens. Apul. Metam, lib. ix.

† Plat. in Timæo.

on his lips.* He is sometimes represented as a naked boy; sometimes as clothed in a reticulated garment; and sometimes as sitting on or issuing from the lotus; and sometimes robed. Here silence is exhibited as a female. It has been seen that Basilides imposed silence as a necessary part of the discipline of his sect, and hence the symbol of silence is frequently found on the Gnostic Gems, and under different representations of Harpocrates. The legend which accompanies this is very imperfect, and so indistinct as not to be entirely legible. On the edge are also characters more strongly marked but altogether barbarous and obscure.—No. 9.

Connected with Anubis is the following representation of Mercury, the form under which he was worshipped by the Greeks; the stone is cornelian, and in my collection. As Anubis was supposed to be Mercury, and had his symbols and functions assigned him; so alternately Mercury was supposed to be Anubis, and is thus exhibited on the Gnostic Gems. He is on some represented as having two heads, and engaged in leading spirits which are half way sunk in the earth, and guiding their descent

* Ausonius calls him *στυλίων*, sigalion, from *στυγ* silence. Epist. to Paul.

with a torch. He is here depicted sitting, as if resting from his active labours. He has all the symbols of Mercury about him ; his winged cap and buskins, and his caduceus ; but what particularly distinguishes him is his three legs, one of which is without a winged buskin, indicating that it belongs to his other form. Three heads are frequent emblematic representations, but this is the only figure I have met with having three legs. Fulgentius says that legs were under the particular guardianship of Mercury.* He is here identified with Anubis, by the initial letters AN in the legend.—No. 10.

The next is a representation of Anubis and Mercury united, and exhibited together in the same body under a double form. The Gem is a blood stone in the collection of Viscount Strangford. It is deeply cut, gives an impression in very bold relief, and the sculpture is superior to the usual style of the Gnostic artists. The figure is represented sitting, having the lower part of his body and limbs that of a dog, and the upper that of a man with two heads. In one hand he holds a caduceus, the symbol of Mercury ; in the other a club, the symbol of Anubis, with which he was sometimes furnished as the guar-

* Fulgentius Plac. lib. iii.

dian of Isis and Osiris. On the opposite face are the letters CAABAAAXAMBPH.—No. 11.

The Gem which follows is a representation of Jupiter, according to the unmixed mythology of the Greeks and Romans. It is in my collection ; the sculpture is rude, and the stone is chalcedony. It appears that they placed among their influential beings, the gods of Greece and Rome, as well as those of Egypt, and mixed with them scriptural names. On this stone the figure is armed with a spear and shield in one hand, and in the other he holds a victory, common on the coins of that period : beneath are the eagle and thunderbolt, the exclusive symbols of Jupiter. We have seen that Simon Magus was represented by his disciples under the form of this god, and it is highly probable that this Gem was fabricated by his particular followers. Montfaucon gives one or two with a similar figure in different attitudes, one in a sitting position with the legend ZVPPIDOR;* but it does not seem to have been a frequent representation, at least but few have come down to us.

* He reads this backwards, and supposes it was RODIPPVZ, the name of the artist who made it, or the person for whom it was made ; but it is clearly intended for Jupiter, such barbarous and incorrect orthography being characteristic of Gnostic sculpture.

The sect of Simon, as they were the earliest, so probably they were the fewest in number, and were superseded by others who adopted different devices. On the opposite side is a very curious inscription, and the only one existing, I believe, found in that form. The letters are arranged so as to represent the coil of a serpent; and though the figure of the reptile is omitted his image is preserved in the inscription, which is as follows: ZABEPBEBEPEIBACACIPACIPBPIHIΘ-CEMECIAAM.—No. 12.

The Gem which follows is a beautiful one in the collection of Viscount Strangford. It is sculptured in a superior manner, on an amethyst, highly convex on both sides, and represents an angel guiding a crocodile with two heads. The crocodile, like sundry other animals, was converted by the Egyptians into an emblem to represent the sun; and this arose, perhaps, from the fanciful idea, that the animal has 365 teeth, the number of days in the year, and so indicating a solar revolution.* Eusebius describes the manner in which the Egyptians displayed this imaginary connection. A figure of the sun was placed in a boat, which was carried

* This was the opinion of Achilles Tatius, a Greek writer of the third century.

on the back of a crocodile. The head and tail of the animal also intimated the east and west, the extremities of the sun's courses. In an *Ægyptian* idol given by Montfaucon, an image which he supposes to be Osiris, is standing on two crocodiles, whose heads are turned in these different directions. It was further supposed, that during the feast of Apis the crocodile never injured, and that it so respected the papyrus, that those who sailed in a boat of that substance were safe from its attacks. From these circumstances the crocodile was held in high respect; some were kept as sacred, and buried in the labyrinth, and a city was built in honour of them, called the city of crocodiles. In the Gem annexed the crocodile has two heads, neither of which naturally belongs to it; one is that of a hawk which we have seen was also a bird representing the sun. The winged figure on its back, with a similar head, seems one of the Gnostic angels; the architects of the universe, directing the solar course, and so guiding the world. On the opposite figure is the inscription $\text{IAPBA}\Theta\text{A TPAMNH}\Phi\text{IBA}\omega\text{XNH ME}\omega$.—No. 13.

The Gem which follows is of an unusual form. It is a cornelian, and in my collection. The scarabæus, or beetle, is known to have

been among the commonest emblems of Egyptian hieroglyphics, a representation of the solar influence in the sidereal, and of the regal power in the political system. It is found in all their pillars, sarcophagi, and other remains of ancient art, and the enormous beetle seen in the British Musæum is a proof of the respect in which they held the form, by the immense size in which they represented it. It is consequently found on the Gems of the Gnostics, with different figures and inscriptions accompanying it. On one is the word ΦPH , the coptic name for sun; on another is a beetle, with Isis on the opposite side, holding in her arms two children, the emblem of maternal fecundity. On the Gem here presented the insect is not cut on the stone, but the stone is formed into the shape of the insect; and on the convex back is represented Isis, or the Egyptian Ceres reclined beside the Nile, with two vases of Egyptian corn, the emblem of vegetable fecundity, naturally expressed by symbols of the sun's rays and the Nile: from the head issues the lotus, and in one hand is held a Nilometer,* and in the other a vase of

* Perhaps a spade. It is the exact form of this agricultural instrument as used at this day in the East. A pointed blade, with a step in the handle over it for the foot to press on.

corn. An amulet of Isis was held in great sanctity: the wearer hoped to obtain by it, according to Kircher, every thing that related to the earth, as fertilized by the Nile—an abundance of earthly goods. This stone is without an inscription.—No. 14.

The one that follows is also without an inscription. It is a Rosso antico, and in my collection. It represents the union of two persons, for whose protection and happiness the amulet was intended, and consists of real and emblematic figures. The first are designated by two heads or busts, one of a male, and the other of a female. Beside them are peace, with her olive-branch, holding up a garland, and plenty, with her cornucopiæ. Between them is the figure of a lion, indicating here the Constellation Leo; during whose ascendant, and under whose influence the happy union took place.*—No. 15.

The two which follow are probably medical amulets. The first is engraved on a convex piece of schist, in a very rude and inexpert manner; it is in the collection of Dr. Adam Clarke. It represents an ibis standing beside

* I should not include this in the present collection, but I have seen several with similar figures which are accompanied by undoubted Gnostic characters.

an altar, surmounted with coarse and unintelligible characters : below is the well known *IAΩ*. The ibis, which is seen in all Egyptian sculptures, was held in high veneration by the people, insomuch so that it was made a capital offence to kill it, and it was always avenged by the death of the perpetrator, even though the act was not intentional.* Among the causes assigned for this veneration, some are fanciful and some are real. When it rested with its head under its wing, it was supposed to resemble a human heart;† it rendered essential service by destroying serpents and other noxious reptiles engendered in the mud of the Nile, and so it was among the benefactors of Egypt, and is usually represented with a serpent at its beak ; it was peculiar to the soil and climate, and when removed elsewhere, it pined and died. Hence it was worshipped with divine honours, and its head was placed on different Egyptian deities, particularly on Isis, who presided over the Nile.‡ Among the benefits conferred by it on mankind was one very singular ; it was supposed to administer to itself an injection, whenever nature pointed out its necessity ; and the pecu-

* Herodot. Euterpe. cap. 65. † Ælian. Hist. Anim. lib. x. c. 29.

‡ Clem. Alexand. Strom. v. p. 671.

liar shape of the bird, with its long curved beak, was favourable to the operation, and hence the salutary practice was taught to man. For all these qualities, it was adopted by the Gnostics as one of the emblematic figures ; and the amulet of the ibis was used in different diseases, particularly against affections of the head.*—No. 16.

The next is a cornelian in the collection of Viscount Strangford. It represents, well sculptured, a combination of three heads ; that of an elephant joined to human faces. The elephantiasis was at this period a very loathsome and mortal distemper. It was so called, because the limbs swelled into shapeless masses, divided by contracted rings ; and the body, but particularly the face, were covered with blotches and papulæ like those of the elephant. Quintus Serenus, the Basilidian physician, who describes the disease, also prescribes the cure, which he says is the juice of the bark of the cedar-tree.† In Montfaucon is given a Gem, representing an

* Kirch. 2. c. 4. p. 671.

† *Est Elephas morbus tristi quoque nomine dirus,
Non solum turpans infandis ora papillis,
Sed cita præcipitans funesto fata veneno ;
Huic erit adversus cedri de cortice succus,
Varios sic ungere frontes,—
Sic faciem—Sic redde salutem.*

elephant approaching a tree, supposed to be intended for a cedar. He gives another of a man holding an elephant's head in his hands; and it is well known, that touching a representation having any supposed connection with the ailment, was formerly a general mode of cure. Hali Ebn Rodan, an Arabian physician, had a scorpion engraved on his ring, which cured by a touch every person bitten.* In the Gem here presented is the head of an elephant, holding in his proboscis the branch of a tree, whose foliage exactly resembles that of a cedar, which seems to allude to the disease and mode of cure; and the faces annexed are intended to represent those of the patient, when diseased, and when cured of the remedy.—No. 17.

The last I shall mention is one which seems to be highly characteristic of the Gnostic sects, as they were depicted by contemporary writers. It is a cornelian, but in the form of a seal-ring, and probably worn as such. It is in the collection of Dr. Adam Clarke, and was obtained by him from a soldier who brought it from Egypt, on the return of the English army from that country. The surface is covered with Gnostic figures and characters, interspersed with

* Scaliger. Ep. ad Vazet.

priapi, phalli, and other emblems, which I do not undertake to explain. It is, however, a highly valuable relique, as confirming all the Christian historians have written on the obscenity of these impure and mysterious Christians, who in the words of the Apostle, “crept in unawares, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.*—No. 18.

Besides these gems which I have here exhibited, there is an infinite variety of others, in which not only the figures and inscriptions here given are altered and varied in different ways, so as to afford a general resemblance, and indicate that they all belong to the same class, and have originated in the same superstitions; but new ones of other devices occur, mingling together Grecian, Egyptian, and Christian emblems and inscriptions. Sphinxes and apes with deities of Greece and Rome, having for legends words taken from the Sacred Scripture. On one is Diana with her bow and crescent, with the legend ΡΑΒΠΗΛΑ; on another is Hercules with his club, striking the Nemæan, Lion, accompanied by the Hebrew word ΑΔΩΝΑΙ Lord; and on a third is ΘΧ, supposed to stand for Θεος Χριστός, God Christ, as on some of the coins of the lower

* Epist. Gen. Jude. ver. 4.

empire, annexed to a figure holding a cup, and seeming to have a reference to the Eucharist. The use and object of many of them are also pointed out by their inscriptions. Some it is obvious are intended to protect the wearer from spiritual evils, as that with the following words, ΑΒΡΑΧΑΕ ΑΔΩΝΑΙ ΑΓΙΟΝ ΟΝΟΜΑ ΔΕΞΙΑΙ ΔΤΝΑ ΜΕC ΦΤΑΑΞΑΤΕ ΟΥΒΙΑΝ ΠΑΤΑΙΝΑΝ ΑΠΟ ΠΑΝΤΙ ΚΑΚΟΥ ΔΑΙΜΟΝΟC. "Lord, Abrasax, holy name propitious powers, protect Vivian Paulina from every evil spirit." Another was a remedy or prophylactic against a particular physical evil, as the following inscription indicates: ΦΤΑΑΞΟΝ ΤΡΕΙΗ CΤΟΜΑΧΟΝ ΠΡΟΚΛΟΥ. "Keep the stomach of Procles healthy." The dogmata also, of the different Gnostic sects are alluded to, and seem to refer the fabrication of the gem to those who held the particular opinion intimated by the figure or inscription. Besides the Ophites indicated by the serpent, the Simonites by Jupiter, and others which I have noted; some are found with the legend ΙΟΥΔΑΑC, seemingly the workmanship of those who made this traitor the object of their veneration; and a very remarkable one exhibits the figure of Apollo with a star or sun on one side, and on the other the inscription ΙΕCΤC ΧΡΙCΤC, thus connecting

Christ with Apollo, and indentifying him with the sun, according to the opinions of those who thought him to be that visible luminary. Finally, great numbers of them exhibit figures of monkeys as Priapi, naked women in indecent attitudes, and other obscenities, indicating, as well as the one I have exhibited, the gross and sensual indulgences of the people for whom they were fabricated, and coinciding in a remarkable degree with the opinions and practices of those polluted Christians, as they are represented by the early fathers of the church. These figures and many others will be found in Kircher and Montfaucon, particularly the latter.*

It is to be regretted that so much remains yet to be discovered in the interpretation of these singular remains; yet it is to be expected that they should be very unintelligible; where silence and secrecy were strictly enjoined to the disciples, mystery and obscurity naturally followed. The very essence of the gem was its mysticism, and its efficacy was supposed to be lost when its meaning was generally known. The greater number of the words were fabricated by themselves, and had no meaning in any language ex-

* Kircher *Œdip. Ægyptiac.* fol. tom. ii. Montfaucon *Antiq. Explic.* folio, tom. ii. and Supplement, tom. ii.

cept that mysterious one which they themselves annexed to them. Had it not been for Irenæus and other contemporary writers, we should in vain have conjectured what their common Abrasax stood for. Such terms of new invention and barbarous sound, as are not so explained by those who had an opportunity of being informed at the time they were used, must be now and continue to be exceedingly obscure and uncertain. It has been suggested that many are Hebrew and Oriental words, corrupted and disguised in Greek characters, and that many more are the names of the 365 angels who presided over the world, and who were invoked by the amulet; and certainly in some instances such a conjecture seems borne out by the inscription: yet much remains still to be accomplished. Having adopted in the account of these gems which I have exhibited, the opinions of the learned, where they have thrown any light on the subject, and with diffidence hazarded a few opinions of my own when they have not; I leave them to those of more ability and opportunity than myself, to clear up the obscurity that remains.

It was the particular fate of Christianity, and it adds another proof of the miraculous interference of Providence in its preservation, that its first promulgation should be accompanied with conceptions so extravagant and conduct so flagitious as that of some of the sects in the first ages; and that it had to overcome, not only the persecutions of its enemies, but the evil reports caused by its friends. The Heathens not knowing otherwise, or wilfully seeking occasion to excite prejudice against the "New Faith," did not fail to impute the extravagance of the Gnostics generally to all Christians; and unfortunately the sect met with such acceptance, and its wild opinions and licentious practices, were so congenial to the understanding and temperament of the people among whom they were circulated; that they became in a short time numerous enough to afford a plausible pretext for confounding the sacred mysteries of the Gospel with the gross and fantastic perversion of them, and identifying the open and pious Christian with the obscure and impious Gnostic.* We know that this prejudice was very early and very generally excited.

* Eusebius and the earlier ecclesiastical writers affirm that it was so της ἐξ αὐτῶν φημης εἰς την του παντος Χριστιανῶν ἔθους διάβολην καταχειμενῆς. Eus. Ecc. Hist. lib. iv. c. 7.

When St. Paul arrived at Rome after his shipwreck, the first character he heard of Christianity was, that "every where it was spoken against."* This account of the evangelists is confirmed by the Gentile historians. Suetonius calls the Christians men of a strange and malicious superstition.† Tacitus says their deadly superstition was repressed by the death of their leader; but it soon broke out again not only in Judea but in the city where every thing atrocious and shameful flows together, and here they were convicted of a hatred to the human race, and detested for their flagitious conduct. Arnobius affirms that the Gentiles believed Christ to have been a magician, and that all Christians equally practised magic.

Nor were these reports confined to the Gentiles, the Jews were no less industrious in circulating them; they asserted that Christians eat

* Acts xxxviii. 20.

† Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novæ et maleficæ —Sueton. Nerq. lib. 15.

‡ Repressaque in præsens exitialis Superstitio, rursus erumpebat non modo per Judæam, sed per urbem quo cuncta undique atrocia et pudenda confluunt.—Christiani odio humani generis convicti.—Tacit. An. lib. 15. No doubt these opinions of the historians were taken up from the practices of the Gnostics. Simon Magus we know came to Rome at this time, where it is probable he gained more celebrity than the apostles.

their own children at their hidden mysteries,* and we have seen that the practice of the Gnostics sanctioned this imputation; that they considered women to be common to all men, a tenet openly avowed by Epiphanes, son of Carpocrates;† and that they mixed in promiscuous intercourse at their secret feasts, a custom which we know was common to all the Gnostic sects.‡ Hence one of the eloquent advocates for the cause of Christianity in the earliest ages complains, that they were charged with three offences—Impiety to God; Suppers of Thyestes; and the Concubinage of Œdipus.§ But the account given by Minutius Foelix of the charges brought against the whole Christian church, is not confined to vague and general rumours, but it is so minute and particular that it seems to carry with it a conviction that it was as true as it was detestable. “When a novice,” said his adversary, “is to be introduced into a participation of Christian rites, an infant covered with meal or flour is placed before him. The novice, not knowing what was beneath, is desired to strike, which he does till he kills

* Origen Contr. Cels. lib. vi.

† Clem. Alexand. Strom. lib. iii.

‡ Eusebius, lib. iv. cap. 7.

§ τρια επιφημιζουσιν ημιν εγκληματα. αθεοτητα, θυεσαιαδειπνα, ειδιποδειους μιξεις.—Athenagoras pro Christianis, p. 30.

the child. It is then drawn forth, the blood licked, and the dismembered limbs eaten by all present, in order that the consciousness of guilt might bind together the novice and the initiated to silence and secrecy, by a common participation in an atrocious act. A day is then set apart for a general celebration of their mysteries, and at the appointed time they assemble together; sisters, parents, children, relatives of all degrees, and of all ages and sexes. After the feast and wine had caused an excitement in the company, a hungry dog is tied to the only candelabrum in the room; he is offered meat by some of the company, and springing forward to seize it, he upsets the light and the company are left in the dark."* The remainder of the passage is not fit to translate, though it is given in the language of one who was sincerely a Christian, and as chaste as he was pure in his life and writings; but who was compelled to pollute his pages with the foul charges of his adversaries, in order to refute them.

When the charges against the early Christians were so distinctly specified, and the whole body was thus identified with those widely spread sectarians, it does not appear to me that

* Minutius Fælix in Octavian.

the fatal consequences of the doctrines and practices of the latter, and the dreadful injuries they inflicted on the cause of Christianity have been sufficiently insisted on,* nor the additional proof it affords of divine interposition to preserve it. The final triumph of the religion of the gospel over all the efforts of the Heathens to extinguish it, is no doubt a strong proof of superhuman support ; but surely the argument for divine interposition is much strengthened when we add to the persecutions of its enemies, what it had to encounter from the perverseness of its friends; had it been of human fancy or device, from the monstrous corruptions and perversions which their vice and folly introduced into it, no doubt "it would have come to nought : " but we discern with astonishment a small but pure flame burning bright, and with an inextinguishable blaze, under all the ashes which for two centuries had been heaped upon it by its professors; we see a clear stream flowing on undefiled and uncorrupted by the torrents of pollution they had been

* Hammond, indeed, in his learned Commentary on the New Testament, has given to this sect the consideration they merited. He refers many passages of the Epistles, not to the Gentiles, but to them; particularly that in the first chapter of Romans, which so exactly characterizes them, " Who though they knew God," &c.

poured into it, by those who professed to drink of its waters : and now at the end of eighteen centuries we are witnesses of that flame illuminating the remotest parts of the earth, and that stream flowing through the most distant lands, and affording the waters of life to the whole of the civilized world.

The Heathens availing themselves of the odium excited by the conduct of the Gnostics, speedily commenced a persecution against the whole Christian community. It was in vain that the early fathers exposed the opinions and practices of these sectarians, and endeavoured to disentangle themselves from all connexion with them, by contrasting their conduct and opinions with the pure doctrines and blameless lives of real Christians. It was in vain that Tertullian, Athenagoras, and Irenæus, pointed out the corruptions and vices of those pretended followers of the Gospel, and detailed the tenets and duties which they themselves and all who founded their faith on the pure word of God, thought themselves bound to believe and to do. " If," said Athenagoras in his energetic address to Aurelius Antoninus, " the crimes objected to us be really true and we are capable of committing them, spare none of us of either sex, but

slay us and our wives and children, till you eradicate a race of human beings who live after the manner of beasts. But if these charges against us are unfounded rumours and empty calumnies, it is your duty to institute an inquiry and ascertain what our lives and opinions really are.”* These and similar appeals were disregarded or disbelieved; and the Heathens pretended that they were not merely justified but called upon to extirpate a race, that besides being disaffected to the government, were of a nature too gross and flagitious to be suffered to live. As Christianity therefore expanded itself it soon began to suffer those persecutions which had been predicted by its divine author. The first commenced under Nero, and was renewed

* Athenagoras was an Athenian philosopher of the second century. He was one of those who had entertained bitter prejudices against the Christians, and had prepared a work to expose their enormities; but being convinced that they were calumniated, and the crimes of a sect imputed to the whole body, he became a convert to their doctrine, and wrote his *Apology* in their defence. As it is not generally quoted, and is considered a good example of the Attic style of that period, I shall subjoin here the original of the above passage as a specimen. Ἀλλ’ ἐν μὲν ἀλήθειαν ἄντα, μὲντοι γένος φέισθησθαι· σὺν γυνάξιν καὶ παῖσι προῤῥήζεις ἡμᾶς ἀπακτείναντα, εἰ γὰρ τίς ἀνθρώπων ζῆ δέκῃν Θηρίων—εἰ δὲ λογοποιῶντα ταῦτα καὶ διάβολοι κίναται—πρὸς ὑμῶν λῶσιπον ἱξετάσιν ποιήσασθα, βίαις δογματῶν τί.—Athenag. *Apol. pro Christian.* Edit. Reichenburgæ. p. 80.

with various degrees of severity till at length an effort was made to extirpate the religion of Christ, so extensive and persevering, that nothing less than a divine interposition seemed to have preserved it from total extinction.

DIOCLETIAN AND MAXIMIAN.

Diocletian was born in Dalmatia, in the year of Christ 245, and on the death of Numerianus, was saluted emperor by the army at Chalcædon, near Constantinople, in 284. He was himself a man of mild, philosophic character, but was instigated by his colleague in the empire, Galerius Maximianus. This atrocious man was born in Dacia : his father was unknown, but he himself gave out, that his mother conceived on the banks of the Danube by Mars, in the shape of a serpent. Among other observances by which the Christians were now distinguished, was their abstaining from meats offered to idols. This so offended the mother of Galerius, that she made it a pretext for urging her son to prosecute them, who was before greatly inclined to it, and availed himself of the first favourable opportunity to effect his purpose. He had been successful in the Per-

sian war, and was passing the winter with Diocletian, in his palace at Nicomedia, where the subject of their secret conversation was the fate of Christianity. Diocletian, from the innate moderation and humanity of his disposition and his studious and contemplative habits, was both by nature and education averse from measures of cruelty ; he consented at first to exclude Christians from offices in the state, hoping that such a concession would exempt him from proceedings of more severity. But Galerius obtained permission to summon a council of the most distinguished military and civil officers, and submit to them the question : meantime the Christians, apprised of what was in agitation, waited in silent and anxious expectation for the terrible result, which was to put to death every man living who professed the religion of the Gospel, and so at once extirpate Christianity. The council met ; they agreed in opinion with Galerius, and Diocletian at length consented to issue those exterminating decrees which have justly stigmatized for ever the character of that emperor. It is to be regretted that those most solemn and important edicts have not been handed down to us in a whole and perfect form, as some of minor consequence have been. The parti-

culars are only to be collected from scattered passages in Eusebius and Lactantius.* Orders were at first given to burn the books of the Christians, destroy their churches, punish those who observed the Lord's day, and put to death all who frequented secret assemblies. This latter distinctive character of the Gnostic sects was supposed to include the whole body of Christians equally charged with their hidden atrocities. The time fixed as for the execution of the edicts was the Feast of *Terminalia*, in the year 302, which historians remark was to put a final *termination* to Christianity; and at the dawn of morning a præfect of the Prætorian band commenced the persecution by entering the principal church of Nicomedia; he first burned the sacred Scriptures, and then regularly sacked and destroyed the edifice; the next day the tremendous decree was every where published, and the bloody massacre commenced. The manner in which this was carried

* Lactantius says, all the decrees of the different emperors against the Christians were collected by Domitius, a celebrated lawyer, in his book "de Officiis Procuratoris;" but this has been lost, and they are not to be found in any other. Lactant. Institut. divin: lib. v. c. 11. p. 578. Mosheim has given many extracts from Eusebius and Lactantius, p. 922—926. Diocletian issued four decrees, the last more cruel than the first.

on, is evidence that the perpetrators thought they were exterminating an impure and ferocious race, to spare whom would be mercy misplaced, and an injury to society. Eusebius describes what he himself was eye-witness to, and the details are too terrible to particularize. He was in the distant province of the Thebais, in Egypt, removed it might be supposed from the centre and fierceness of the persecuting spirit ; yet there he saw one hundred Christians destroyed in a day by different kinds of death. In some instances axes were blunted on their mangled limbs, and their executioners so tired with slaughter, that it was necessary to send for fresh men and new implements to complete the work of destruction. If this was the case in a distant province, what were they to expect immediately under the eye, and within the grasp of their inveterate persecutors. The whole of the Roman empire was at this time filled with them ; and there was not a province, city, town, hamlet, garden, or cottage in which diligent pursuit was not made for them. The few that escaped by chance fled to the most solitary deserts from the haunts of their fellow men ; and I have visited in the Gulf of Nicomedia and other remoter places in the East, caverns in the sides of nearly inacces-

sible mountains, where they endeavoured to find refuge and concealment, during this dismal period. Many of the saints and martyrs recognized by the Greek church perished on this occasion, and they still shew in the church of St. Euphemia at Chalcedon, the implements of torture by which she and numbers of her friends were put to death. In this way historians assert that in one province alone 150,000 Christians perished by various kinds of cruel deaths;* and so complete was supposed to be the extirpation of the sect, that coins were struck and the following inscriptions set up, recording the fact that the Christian superstition was now utterly exterminated, and the worship of the gods restored by Diocletian, who assumed the name of Jupiter; and Maximian, who took that of Hercules.

* Gibbon calculates that 2000 persons only were put to death in ten years! though Eusebius, who lived at the time, affirms that from 60 to 100 a day were executed in the province of Thebais alone: *πλείονων ἢ ἑξέκοντα—καὶ παλιν εκατον ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ*. Euseb. Ec. Hist. 1. 8. c. iv. In a book of the Roman pontiffs, quoted by Baronius, the number of martyrs is stated at 17,000 in a month; nor is it to be supposed that the persecution relaxed afterwards, when it was the avowed intention—*Christianam Religionem a medio tollere penitus, radicitusq: convellere* Bar. Hist. Eccles. tom. ii. p. 766.

DIOCLETIANVS IOVIVS ET
 MAXIMIAN : HERCVLEVS
 CÆS : AVG :
 AMPLIFICATO PER ORIENTEM ET OCCIDENTEM
 IMP : ROM :
 ET
 NOM : CHRISTIANORVM
 DELETO QVI
 REMP : EVER
 TEBANT

DIOCLETIAN : CÆS :
 AVG : GALERIO IN ORI
 ENTE SVPER
 TITIONE CHRIST :
 VBIQVE DELETA ET CVL
 TV DEOR : PROPAGATO

“ Diocletian Jove and Maximian Hercules, August Cæsars, having encreased the Roman empire in the east and west, and extirpated the name of Christians who were overturning the Republic.”

“ To Diocletian Cæsar and Augustus Galerius in the east, having every where extirpated the Christian superstition and restored the worship of the gods.”*

* These inscriptions were found on beautiful columns at

The Christian writers do not fail to record many marks of divine anger displayed on this occasion. The palace of the emperor was struck with lightning and immediately consumed, which so affected him, that he continually saw flashes of fire before his eyes, and he was seized with a dangerous fever, from which he with difficulty recovered. He soon after abandoned the empire to his colleague, and retired to a private station, in which he died of grief and abstinence, having obstinately refused all aliment; while his more atrocious colleague, Galerius, having exercised against all his subjects, that avarice and cruelty which he began by practising on the Christians, was wasted away with a consuming and loathsome disease, and died

Clunia, in Hispania Taraconensis. They are preserved in Baro-nius, Occo, and Gruterus, p. 280. n. 3, 4. It is remarkable that Gibbon who quotes Gruterus for other inscriptions, takes no notice of these. Similar pillars were said to be erected by Nero, and one was found in Spain, the inscription of which is preserved; but some doubt has been thrown upon the authenticity of this, and with reason; for it is well known that his persecution extended only to the Christians at Rome, who were accused of having set the city on fire, a crime which the rest was never charged with participating in; but the decree of Diocletian extended to the whole empire, and it was known to have been executed in Spain with rigour by Datianus, the governor. Many of these pillars were probably erected on the occasion in other places; but when Christianity was restored, the Christian Iconoclasts destroyed them with other images, as odious and horrid memorials.

with great horror. Without having recourse to supernatural interposition, we may easily suppose that such would be the natural effects of reflection and remorse on men whose conscience was burthened with the cruelties they had perpetrated.

In the annexed coin, No. 19, the obverse represents the head of the Emperor Diocletian, crowned with laurel, and his shoulders covered with a robe, with the legend, *DIOCLETIANVS PERPETVVS FELIX AVGVSTVS*.—"Diocletian, perpetual, happy, august." On the reverse is Jupiter holding in his raised hand a thunderbolt, and trampling a kneeling figure, with serpent-like feet, having the legend *IOVI FVLGERATORI*—"To Jupiter the thunderer." The prostrate figure designates Christianity, and the figure of Jupiter brandishing his thunderbolt, is taken probably from Ovid's description;* he is

* "Quo centimanum dejecerat ignis Typhœa." *Ov. Met.* III. 304. Vaillant adds the following remark: *Diocletianum exhibere voluisse suum Jovem fulmina vibrantem in Christianos veluti olim finxere poetæ in gigantes, quum Christiani bella moverent in Jovem, inq: reliquam deorum turbam.*—*Num. Imp: Rom. fol. tom. iii. p. 51.* This highly interesting coin is not among the Diocletians in my possession; it is described by Bandurius and others, and there is one in the collection of the king of France, from which I had the annexed copy taken.

dashing down the Christians with the same fire as he hurled down the Titans, who had equally but vainly tried to dispossess him of heaven. The figure of this coin is very remarkable, and has a resemblance so strong as to identify it with the Abrasax on the Gnostic gems, with serpent-like feet, supposed to be the god of the Christians.* We see him here then disarmed of his weapons, the very being which the Christians were supposed to adore, and this single sect and its impure idol bringing destruction on the whole of the Christian church. In the exergue, *PECVNIA ROMÆ* "the money of Rome."

A coin similar to that of Diocletian was struck by his colleague, Maximian, to commemorate an event in which he had acted so distinguished a part.

In the annexed coin, No. 20, the obverse represents the naked bust of the emperor, crowned with a wreath of laurel, having the legend *MAXIMIANVS PERPETVVS AVGVSTVS*. On the reverse is the figure of Jupiter Tonans, in nearly the same attitude, and with the same legend as the former, but having his head covered.

* See No. 5, 6, 7, 18. Besides these here exhibited Montfaucon gives thirty-eight fac-similes with this figure, which seems to have been the universal representation of their deity.

In the prostrate figure the serpentine part of the legs is not distinct, and it was on the whole more of a human form. It may be that Diocletian wished to represent only the depraved and corrupt sectarians of which his figure is the emblem ; and that his more atrocious colleague, careless of distinction, exhibited the genius of Christianity under any form as equally the object of his persecution.*

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT.

But while, to all human calculation, Christianity was now abolished in the world, the hand of Providence was visibly stretched out for its preservation. Mankind immediately after saw with astonishment, that it became more vigorous and flourishing than ever ; and the head of the mighty Roman empire adopted its tenets from a conviction of its truth, at the time that his predecessors were boasting of its total destruction on account of its falsehood.

Constantine, son of Constantius Chlorus who governed Britain, and Helena, a woman of obscure birth, who had embraced Christianity, was born in the year 274, and was early instructed by his mother in her own doctrines.† For some

* See Tanini Supp: to Bandurius, tab. iii.

† Some assert that the mother was instructed and converted by the son. Eus: Vit: Const. cap. 47.

time after he came to the imperial throne he still adhered to the rites of heathenism, and all his early coins bear the impress and inscription of heathen worship, being frequently dedicated JOVI CONSERVATORI, "to Jupiter the Preserver," and other deities of heathen mythology. He was, however, completely converted in the year of our Lord 312; and according to ecclesiastical writers, his conversion was effected, like that of St. Paul, by a sensible miracle, while he was performing a journey on a public road. He was opposed after his elevation to the imperial purple by Maxentius, a man of furious passions, gross and sensual habits, and a cruel persecutor of the Christians. Constantine was in Gaul, and having heard of the opposition of his rival, who was in possession of Rome, he immediately crossed the Alps and proceeded against him. When near Verona, on his march, and meditating on the difficulties of his situation, he was roused from deep thought by a bright light which suddenly illumined the sky, and looking up, he saw the sun, which was in its meridian, surmounted by a cross of fire, and beneath it this inscription *τοῦτο νικᾷ*, "in this conquer."*


* Eusebius asserts, that the emperor *himself* declared to him this circumstance, and confirmed it with a solemn oath; and he

He immediately adopted the cross as his ensign, and formed on the spot the celebrated *Labarum*, or Christian standard, which was ever after substituted for the Roman eagle. This, as Eusebius describes it, was a spear crossed by an arrow, on which was suspended a velum, having inscribed on it the monogram $\chi\rho$, formed by the Greek letters Chi and Rho, the initials of the name of Christ. Under this he marched forward, and rapidly triumphed over all his enemies; and, struck with the preternatural warning he had received, and its consequences, he now publicly embraced the doctrines of that religion under whose banner he had conquered. Shortly after he removed the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, which was thenceforward called after him Constantinople. Here he struck upon his future coins an impress and legend alluding to the extraordinary events of his conversion, and no more traces are to be found on them of Pagan emblems.

The coin annexed, No. 21, represents on the obverse the naked bust of the emperor, crowned

adds, "who after this will doubt the truth of the narrative?"

Αυτου δὲ τοῦ νικητοῦ Βασιλέως ἐξαγγελισαντος, ὅρκου τε πισθίσασαμενός τὸν λόγον· τίς ἂν ἀμφιβαλεῖ μὴ οὔχι πιστεύσαι τῷ διηγήματι;—Eus. vit. Constant. lib. i.

with a laurel wreath, and surrounded with the legend FLAVIVS VALERIVS CONSTANTINVS, PERPETVVS, FELIX, AVGVSTVS—"Flavius Valerius Constantine, perpetual, happy, august." On the reverse is the whole length figure of the emperor in armour, covered with a helmet, standing on the prow of a galley :* in his right hand he holds a globe, surmounted by a rayed phœnix, the adopted emblem of his family, to intimate the renovation of his empire ; in his left is the *Labarum*, inscribed with the monogram  ; behind is the angel of victory, directing his course ; round is the appropriate legend, FELIX TEMPORVM REPARATIO—"the happy reformation of the times." In the exergue are the letters, "PECVNIA TREVERORVM," "the money of Triers."

The last event of Constantine's life was a circumstance as remarkable as it was interesting in the early history of Christianity. He had deferred his baptism till the warnings of sickness and debility reminded him of its necessity. He had been in a declining state of health, and

* A ship was the common emblem of the state among the Romans, as in Horace's Ode, "O Navis;" and Grey adopts the classic metaphor in his bard.

"In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes."

proceeded to the warm baths of Helenopolis, a town in the Gulf of Nicomedia, which he had called after his mother in the hope that they would restore him. After some time passed there in vain trials of their efficacy, he caused himself to be removed to the pleasant suburbs of Nicomedia; and as the feast of the Pentecost was now at hand, he expressed a strong desire to have this important ceremony performed. He therefore called the Christian bishops round his couch, and made to them an affecting address. "The time now," said he, "demands that I should partake in this seal of salvation. It had been mine intention to have proceeded to Bethabara, and receive this solemn rite in the waters of the Jordan, in public imitation of my Lord; but God best knows what is expedient, and let his will be done."* Every preparation was therefore made for the ceremony, and it was performed by the Bishop of Nicomedia. It is to be regretted that Eusebius, who gives a simple but affecting account of the circumstances attending this ceremony, and even the

* ὅρα τούτου σῶτηριον σφράγισματος μετασχεῖν· ἐπὶ ρεῖθρα Ἰορδάνου προτά μου τοῦτ' ἐνενοῦμεν ποιῆσαι. Θεὸς δ' ἄρα το συμφεραν εἰδῶς, ἐντεῦθεν ἦδη τοῦτων ἡμας ἀξιῶι.—Eusebius vita. Const. lib. iv. 63.

discourses of Constantine, should not have recorded also the manner in which it was performed. It appears from him and other authorities, that it was the usual practice for those who could command the opportunity to proceed to Palestine, and be immersed in the waters of the Jordan, as he himself had intended ; it is probable therefore that it was done at Nicomedia as it would have been at Bathabara, by immersion. He appeared deeply impressed with the ceremony, and caused himself to be clad in a white robe, as emblematic of the purity it conferred, which he never laid aside to resume the purple, and in this robe he died ; a circumstance in the life of the emperor so very remarkable and detailed with particular notice of the ecclesiastical historian, it is not likely would be passed over unnoticed on the coins of the empire when so many events of less importance have been commemorated ; accordingly we find that a coin was struck, probably after his death, alluding to the circumstance. It appears also to have been struck in Brittain, the government of his father, and as some say the birth-place of himself and of his mother, and where Christianity had already made a considerable progress, and a deep interest would be

naturally felt in an event so important in the life of the emperor. He died soon after the ceremony, in the year 337, at the hour of mid-day, at the feast of the Pentecost, after a reign of thirty years, having been, as Eusebius remarks, the first Christian sovereign who had ever received the regeneration of baptism.

The annexed coin, No. 22, represents on the obverse the emperor in his robes, crowned with a wreath of laurel, having the legend IMPERATOR CONSTANTINVS PIVS FELIX AVGVSTVS. On the reverse is a full length figure of the Emperor cloaked, holding in his outstretched right hand a globe on which the cross had not yet been placed, and in his left a rod or wand—the legend, CONSTANTINO PIO AVGVSTO BAPTISMATE NATO. “To Constantine the Pius, August, born, or regenerate, in baptism.” In the Exergue PECUNIA LONDINI CUSA; “money coined at London.”*

* I have given this highly interesting coin on the respectable authorities of Occo, Bergerus, Mediobarbus, and Du Cange, who all concur in the above reading and interpretation. It has been however disputed by Harduin, and after him by Jobert and others, and some of the reasons they assign seem to me to be very frivolous; 1st, because another coin is found having in the legend BRP NAT which is interpreted bono reipublicæ Nato, “born for the good of the republic,” and therefore it is inferred that the A in

CONSTANTIUS.

Flavius Julius Constantius was the son of Fausta, the second wife of Constantine; he was born in Pannonia in 317, and was the favourite son of his father. He is charged with conniving at the murder of all his kindred, who were, with the exception of two, Gallus and Julian, put to death by the soldiery after his father's decease. As soon as he assumed the purple he was opposed by Magnentius, the tyrant of the west, aided by

the former is not an A, but intended for an R as in the latter! 2dly, Because the letters PAVG standing for Pater Augusti, the father of Augustus, cannot stand for Constantine the great, because none of his sons at the time of his baptism had received the title of Augustus: but PAVG do not stand for Pater Augusti, but for Pius Augustus, epithets very common in other coins, and on this very appropriate. 3dly, Because the letters in the exergue refer neither to Nicomedia, where the Greek writers, or to Rome where the Latins say he was baptized; but letters in the exergue are acknowledged to be very obscure and imperfectly understood. If they do stand for the initials of towns where money was struck, I presume the meaning I have ventured to give, and the reasons, are at least as probable as any other. A great many of the coins of his father Constantius Chlorus have in the exergue PL, and not a few of Constantine himself; but the letters are rarely met with on those of any other Emperor who would not be supposed to have the same interest in the place. Jobert reads PL where ever it occurs, pecunia Lugduni, "the money of Lyons," but his commentator, pecunia Londini, the "money of London," and adds very justly; il n'est pas douteux que dans le Bas Empire on n'ait battu dans la Grande Bretagne, des monnoyes au coin des Empe-reurs.—Science des Med. tom. ii. p. 104.

Veteranio; but he detached the latter, a very aged man, by his address, and having deposed him he proceeded against Magnentius. Both armies met at Mursa in Pannonia, the present Essek; and while they were engaged, Constantius passed the whole day in the church of the martyrs under the walls of the city. On this occasion the ecclesiastical writers relate a circumstance which, according to them, had an important influence on the fate of the battle. Cyril, the bishop of Jerusalem, was celebrating divine service about the time of the Pentecost, when suddenly there appeared a splendid cross in the sky, extending from the Mount of Olives to Mount Calvary, about 15 stadia in length, and this miracle was the occasion of converting many Jews and Gentiles. They further add that this splendid meteor was seen as far as Mursa in Pannonia on the day of the battle, and so terrified Magnentius that he and his army fled at the sight of it.* The Emperor was made acquainted

* Zozomene, lib. iv. cap. 5. Gibbon says that Nicephoras also, who could not refuse a tale of a miracle even from an Arian enemy, relates this story after Cyril; but I cannot find that Nicephoras relates any such thing. He tells, indeed, an extraordinary event, but of a different kind; Magnentius had mounted a high throne, and called on his soldiers to salute him, but instead of doing so, they saluted and called for Constantius.—Niceph. lib. ii. c. 28.

with the circumstance both by report and by letter from Cyril, and he seems to have commemorated it on his coins. His father had formed the Labarum from an impression of a similar event on him, but he had omitted the inscription which was said to accompany it, which his son for the first time impressed as a legend on his coins.

In the annexed coin, No. 28, the Emperor is represented in his robes with the legend **DOMINUS CONSTANTIVS PERPETVVS FELIX AVGVSIVS**.* On the reverse is victory crowning the emperor, who holds the Labarum with the monogram of **Χ** depicted on it, and round it is the legend **HOC SIGNO VICTOR ERIS**; "in this sign you will be victorious." In the exergue **A**, for **PRIMUM SISCENSIVM**, "the first tribute of Siscia," a town in Croatia.

Julian, the only survivor of his family, was now rising into reputation with the army, which alarmed the timid and suspicious mind of Constantius. He therefore sent for a large body of forces, under the pretext of strengthening his own army in the war he was waging against the Persians, but in reality to weaken that of

* On the field is **D**. which is said to stand for the fourth mint.

Julian ; the soldiers, however, instead of obeying the orders of the emperor, proclaimed their favourite Julian, and conferred on him the title of Augustus. When Constantius heard of this he immediately returned from Mesopotamia, and hastened to suppress the revolt ; but he was overtaken with sickness at Tarsus, where he died of a fever in the 45th year of his age, and the 14th of his reign.

The piety of Constantius and his sincere attachment to the Christian faith, are not to be doubted ; but he is charged with having adopted heterodox opinions ; and as they were then the subject of acrimonious discussion in the church, the ecclesiastical historians of the adverse party have been severe in their censures. The council of Nicæa had been called by his father to settle some disputes, and they had decided on the doctrine of the Trinity, the identity and coëternity of the son with the father.* It is certain that Constantius, recalled St. Athanasius, the great supporter of this opinion, whom his father had banished, and on more than one occasion had afforded him protection ; but the disputes of the Arians with this rigid and un-

* The words of Zozomene are ὁμοῦτις καὶ συναϊδὸς ἔστιν ὁ υἱὸς τῷ πατρὶ.—Zozom. lib. i. c. 15.

compromising defender of the ~~trinity~~, and the infirm purpose of Constantius in giving way to them, have stigmatized his name also as being an opponent of the orthodox opinion ; a rumour, of which subsequent writers have not failed to avail themselves. Whatever might have been his private opinions, however, he certainly thought it right to announce publicly his acquiescence with the decrees of the council of Nicæa on the subject, for he has impressed upon his coins a large cross, with alpha and omega at each side, intimating in characters not to be mistaken his conviction of the eternity of Christ's character.

In the annexed coin, No. 24, the obverse displays the bust of the emperor, crowned with a diadem of jewels, and his shoulders covered with the imperial robe with the legend **DOMINVS CONSTANTIVS PERPETVVS FELIX AVGVSTVS**. On the reverse is a large monogram of **Χ**, having on one side **A**, and another **Ω**, by which Christ is designated in the Revelations as the beginning and end, the first and the last. The legend is appropriate, **SALVS AVGVSTI**, "the salvation of Augustus." In the exergue **TREVERIS OBSIGNATA**, "coined at Triers."

MAGNENTIUS.

Magnus Magnentius was said by some authors to have been a Briton, and by others a German captive. He was enrolled in the Roman army, and served under the emperor Constans, who was so attached to him, that he saved his life in battle by covering him with his military cloak. This signal service he repaid by depriving Constans of his life and crown by a stratagem. Marcellinus, the prefect of the royal treasury, invited to a feast he had given to celebrate his birth-day, the senior officers of the army; and during the entertainment when the reason of the company was obscured by wine, he introduced Magnentius dressed in the imperial robes; and persuaded his guests, who were taken by surprise, and not in a state to exercise their understanding, to swear allegiance to the new sovereign. The soldiers, corrupted by the treasures which Marcellinus had at his command, followed the example of the officers, and Magnentius was recognised emperor by the army at Augustodunum, now the town of Autun, in Burgundy. When Constans heard of this, he hastened into Spain with a few followers, but was seized in passing the Pyre-

næan mountains, and slain by a Frank soldier. Magnentius was then crowned emperor, and succeeded to that part of the empire allotted to Constans. He now sent an embassy to Constantius, the brother of Constans, to propose a division of the empire. This was agreed to ; and to ratify the compact an intermarriage took place. Constantius gave his sister, and he took the daughter of Magnentius. In a short time, however, these arrangements were disregarded, and a war ensued between them. He was finally defeated, and his army destroyed in the Cottian Alps, in the year 353, from whence he fled to Lyons, where he died by his own hand, in the 50th year of his age, after a reign of three years and seven months.

Magnentius was a man imbued with literature and of considerable oratorical powers, but of a timid disposition, and exceedingly cruel when his fears were alarmed. He was, or professed to be, an orthodox believer in the doctrine of the trinity ; and like his rival, Constantius, adopted the alpha and omega on his coin. It is a favourite theme with Gibbon and the writers of his class to exaggerate the schisms which divided the church at this time, and to represent the Arian heresy as exceedingly pre-

valent among all ranks. It should appear from the coins of the rival emperors that this was not the case. Assuming that they were indifferent to the doctrine themselves, it is a presumption that others were not so. Indeed such a character as Magnentius could not be supposed to have any serious religious impressions; yet his assumption of the emblem of the trinity on his coin is a proof that it was the universal belief; for as he relied entirely for his support on public opinion, he would not have publicly adopted and avowed what was opposed to it.

The coin annexed, No. 25, represents on the obverse the emperor's bust, bare headed, in his imperial robes, with the legend **DOMINVS MAGNENTIVS PERPETUUS FELIX AVGVSTVS**. On the reverse is the large monogram of Christ, between Λ and ω , as in the preceding coin, with the legend **SALVS DDOMINORVM NNOSTRORVM AVGVSTORVM ET CAESARVM**, alluding to Constantius and his brother Decentius, who were joined* with him in the empire. In the exergue, **AVGVSTODVNI MONETA B**, for **SECUNDO ANNO REGNI**. "The money of Autun in the 2d year." *

* Mediobarbus is rather doubtful of the signification of the letters in the exergue, and says, forte Ambiani. I have ventured

DECENTIUS.

Decentius was the brother of Magnentius, and was created Cæsar by him in the year 351, when he undertook to manage for him the government of Gaul. He was, however, expelled from thence by Chrodomarius, King of the Germans, and took refuge in the city of Triers. Being driven from this also, and finding his brother's affairs growing desperate, he, like him, put an end to his own existence, having enjoyed the dignity of Cæsar for two years.

Among the few coins which he struck, which have come down to us, the most remarkable is the one which recognizes the doctrine of the Trinity. I give it here as another proof, if any was wanting, that it was then the received opinion of every part of the Roman empire.

In the annexed coin, No. 26, the emperor is represented in the obverse as in the former, bare-headed, in his robes, with the legend **DOMINVS DECENTIVS FORTIS CAESAR**. On the reverse are the same monogram and legend, accompanied by alpha and omega. In the exergue **TREVERIS SIGNATA**, "coined at Triers."

on the above interpretation from its being the place where he first assumed the purple, and probably the place where he first struck a coin

JULIAN THE APOSTATE.

The sons of Constantine were succeeded by his nephew Flavius Claudius Julianus, the son of Julius Constantius, half-brother to Constantine. He was born at Constantinople in 331, but having lost his father early, he was delivered by his uncle to Eusebius, of Nicomedia, to be educated in doctrines of Christianity, and with him he passed his youth in a castle of Cappadocia. Liberated from thence at an adult age, he afterwards associated with the philosophers of Asia, and soon abandoned the principles in which he had been educated.* When called to the empire by the death of Constantius, he openly deserted the cause of Christianity, and perpetuated the memory of his apostacy by abolishing the Christian emblems on the coins of the empire, and replacing not only the heathen emblems of former emperors, but adding sundry others, borrowed from Egyptian superstitions. Some of these coins represent him as an Egyptian deity, and his wife Helena as Isis, holding a sistrum, with

* He had even taken orders in the Christian church, and read the Scriptures publicly to the people: conceiving that piety was his greatest ornament.—Greg. Naz. p. 58.

the legend Isis FARIA ; others display bulls, and dogs, and reptiles, and similar abominations of Egyptian worship, "changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."* While sacrificing to one of his idols, Mares, a venerable Bishop of Constantinople, blind with age, was led by the hand to the heathen altar, and there rebuked the emperor openly for his abandonment of Christ. "Will your Galilæan

* Ep. to the Romans, i. 23. The Romans in the time of Augustus do not seem to have as yet adopted any Egyptian gods. Virgil represents them as set in opposition to those of Rome, and calls them monsters—"omnigenūmq; deūm monstra," *Æn.* lib. iii. 698. "monstrous deities of all kinds." Several individuals had at different times attempted to introduce this worship ; but in the 700 year of the city, a decree was promulgated by the senate that the fanes of Isis and Osiris, which they had erected, should be torn down, and the worship abolished ; and afterwards a decree was issued by Augustus, that the rites performed in the pomærium should be inhibited.—Dion. Hist. Rom. lib. xl. 42. Tiberius proceeded further ; he ordered all the statues to be cast into the Tyber, and the priests to be crucified.—Tacit. *Ann.* l. ii. Sueton : cap. 36. In the days of St. Paul and Juvenal, however, their worship was introduced ; the gods to whom adoration was paid were cats, dogs, apes, oxen, beetles, onions, leeks, and other vegetables, which occasioned the satirist to exclaim,

Oh sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis

Numina.

Sat. xv. l. 10.

"Oh sacred people, whose gods grow in their gardens."

God," said Julian, mockingly, "restore you your sight?"—"He has taken it from me in mercy," said Mares, "that I might not see your apostacy." He was at length led into an expedition against the Persians, and being betrayed by a guide whom he trusted, on the banks of the river Euphrates, he was attacked and mortally wounded with an arrow. Being removed to his tent from the field of battle, covered with blood, and perceiving death approaching, the horrors of his apostacy rushed upon his mind; and throwing about his blood in the agony of death, he exclaimed, as some authors assert,* "Vicisti Galilæe!"—"thou hast conquered, O Galilæan!" and soon after expired, in the year 363, aged 32, having reigned only one year and eight months.

In the first annexed coin, No. 27, the obverse represents the bust of the emperor in his robes, his head bound by a diadem of pearls, and having a long beard,† with this legend

* This is the account of Christian writers; that of the Pagan is very different.

† The coins of the lower empire are valuable for preserving likenesses. In his extraordinary work, the Misopogon, he himself describes this beard: *αὐτος πρόσθεϊκα τὸν βάθον τοῦτονι πυγῶνα—διαθεόντων ἀνεχομαι τῶν φθειῶν ὥσπερ ἐν λοχμῇ τῶν θηρίων.* "I have added this long beard, and I permit animals (*φθειρων pediculorum*) to run about in it like beasts in a thicket."

—DOMINVS FLAVIVS CLAVDIVS JVLIANVS, PERPETVVS, PIVS, AVGVSTVS. On the reverse is the Egyptian deity *Apis*, who was worshipped under the form of a bull,* surmounted with stars representing his divinity, with the legend SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE —“the Security of the Republic.” In the exergue, CONSTANTINOPOLEŒS PECUNIA, “the money of Constantinople.”

In the second, No. 28, the obverse repre-

The Abbe de la Bleterie, who translated the work, says that his friends entreated—*que je supprimasse totalement l'idée que presente ici Julien*; but he very properly adds,—*la delicatesse Francaise ira-t-elle jusqu' : au falsifier les auteurs?*—Hist. Jov, tom. ii. p. 96. In some coins of Julian in my possession he is without a beard, which he did not cherish till he became ambitious of the reputation of a philosopher.

* The Israelites first adopted this idol in their escape from Egypt, carrying with them many of the abominations of the people with whom they had lived so long. Exod. ch. xxxii. v. 4. They were frequently rebuked for it afterwards by the prophets, “changing their glory into the similitude of a calf, that eateth hay,” Psalm cvi. 20. The inhabitants of Antioch, at a subsequent period, reproached Julian for the same offence. They had received (as Theodoret says, lib. iii. c. 22.) their Christianity from the greatest apostles, Peter and Paul, and were proud of the distinction that in their city the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. They were indignant that Julian not only adopted the worship of this Egyptian animal, but that he commemorated his folly, putting it on his coin—*τῷ νομίσματι αὐτοῦ ἔχειν τᾶνρον, δὲ τὸν κόσμον ἀνατετράφθαι*—“He placed the bull upon his coin, and he overturned the universe.”

sents the Egyptian deity *Serapis*, crowned with a modius or corn measure, and rays issuing from his head; with the legend DEO SARAPIDI—"to the God Sarapis," On the reverse is *Anubis*, whom the Egyptians worshipped under the form of a man with a dog's head, holding in his right hand a sistrum, and in his left a caduceus, the legend VOTA PVBLICA—"the prayers of the public."*

IOVIAN.

The family of Constantine terminated with Julian; and as the first had endeavoured to establish Christianity, so the last had endeavoured to extinguish it. His successor, however, immediately repaired the injuries he had inflicted. Jovianus was born in Pannonia, in 331. He was with Julian's army at the time

* The Egyptian deity Anubis is supposed to have been the same as the Mercury, and hence he is represented with the caduceus, as before noted. Lucian, in derision, calls him *κυνοκεφαλαι* "dog's head," and Virgil, *Latrator Anubis*, "Anubis barking like a dog." Gibbon praises the "philosophic character" of Julian: to have rejected Christianity might have entitled him to the name of philosopher in the modern acceptation of the word; but surely that man could not deserve it, who adopted in exchange the most base and revolting superstitions that ever degraded the human mind. In the words of the historian—*Ὁ γὰρ δὴ βασιλεὺς πολυδαισινδαιμῶν συνεχῶς θύων πρὸς τοῖς βώμοις τῶν εἰδωλῶν*. Soc. Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. c. 27.—"For the king being exceedingly afraid of dæmons, was constantly sacrificing on the altars of their idols."

of his defeat, and after his death, with great prudence and management extricated it from its perilous situation, for which occasion he was declared emperor. As he had been educated in the principles of Christianity, he firmly adhered to its doctrines, and on his march to return to Constantinople, displayed the Labarum,—which Julian had laid aside and prohibited—made a public profession of his faith, and enforced it to his subjects; allowing, however, a certain toleration to those who followed heathen rites, excepting only such as practised magic. He then applied himself to repair the injuries Julian had inflicted on religion, by rebuilding Christian churches, and removing from them the heathen idols of his predecessor. On the island of Corfu is still standing one of the temples he erected, with a very perfect inscription on a tablet in the frieze over the gate, which I copied, intimating what he had done:—

ΝΙΣΤΙΝ ΕΧΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΝ ΕΜΩΝ ΜΕΝ ΕΩΝΥΝΕΡΙΘΟΝ
 ΟΙΜΑΚΑΡΥΜΕΔΟΝΤΟΝ ΔΙΕΡΟΝ ΕΚΤΙ ΚΑΝΗΟΝ
 ΝΙΗΝΩΝΤΕ ΜΕΝ Η ΚΑΙ ΒΩΜΟΥΣ ΕΞΑΛΛΑ ΠΑΣ
 ΚΕΡΟΣ ΑΠΟΥΤΙΔΑΝ ΗΣΙΟΒΙΑΝ ΟΣ ΕΔΟΝΑΝ ΑΚΤΙ

“ I, Jovian, having powerful faith as the auxiliary of my attempts, have built this sacred temple to thee, blessed Ruler on high!—overturning the heathen altars and shrines of the

Greeks, I present this offering to thee, O King! with an unworthy hand."*

The first coins he struck alluded to the same event, the re-establishment of Christianity.

In the annexed coin, No. 29, the obverse represents the bust of the emperor in his robes, his chest remarkably thick and clumsy, and his head bound with a diamond of pearls; the legend, JOVIANVS PERPETVVS FELIX AVGVSTVS. The reverse represents the emperor in armour on horseback; before him is a soldier bearing the Labarum, surmounted by a cross, which the emperor is anxiously pointing to, and following as his guide; behind him is an angel, with an olive branch in one hand, and in the other a crown, which she is stretching to place on the bare head of the emperor. The legend, ADVENTVS AVGVSTI, "the X coining of Augustin," in the exergue, ROMA, when it was coined.

Nor was Jovian less distinguished for his

* I have prefixed to this essay a view of the temple as it stands at present. I cannot find a notice either of the temple or the inscription in any author I have consulted; and I imagine they are now for the first time published. They are curious, as being one of the earliest edifices perhaps erected expressly for Christian worship, and the only inscription extant which commemorate the circumstance.

X *Continued*

zeal in re-establishing Christianity than for the opinion which he espoused concerning it. When he arrived at Antioch, he shewed his attachment to the orthodox faith, by restoring all the churches to the adherents of the council of Nicæa, invited Athanasius to visit him there, and obtained from him a rule of faith to regulate his belief. During his short reign he had but little opportunity of striking that immense number and variety of coins which both his predecessors and successors have left behind them. The few, however, that have come down to us, are generally impressed with Christian emblems, and one contains the expression of his belief in the doctrine of the Trinity; having the large monogram of Christ occupying the whole field of the reverse, with alpha and omega at each side. Jovian seems to have been the last who adopted this device and inscription. The point of doctrine was now nearly settled in the Christian church, the disputes to which it had given rise, had ceased to agitate the public mind, and future emperors did not think it necessary to impress on their coins their conviction of an article of faith which was no longer called in question. Jovian died at a small town near Nicæa, in the year 364, having reigned but eight months. He was found dead

in his bed, supposed to have been suffocated by the vapour of charcoal.

In the annexed coin, No. 30, the obverse contains the head of the emperor, and legend as in the former—the reverse and legend as in that of Constantius.*

GRATIANUS.

Flavius Gratianus was the son of Valentinianus, and his first wife, Severa, born in 359. His early disposition was very good, and it was predicted of him that he would equal the best princes. Indeed it is creditable to his character, that his immoderate love of hunting was objected to him as a fault by a Pagan writer, as it is a presumption, he had no other which could be made a subject of reproach. On the death of his father, his brother, Valentinianus, by a second marriage, was elected Augustus by the

* The coins of Jovian are curious, as preserving, like many of the lower empire, personal marks by which the man was distinguished. He is described by Ammianus Marcellinus, as a tall clumsy man, who walked with a heavy gait; *incedebat autem, motu corporis gravi, vasta proceritate et ardua*, lib. xxv. cap. 10. Cedrenus adds, that he was of such a size that none of the royal garments would fit him; *τὴν τέ τὴν ἡλικίαν εὐμήκης ὥς μεδε ἔν τῶν βασιλικῶν ἱματιῶν ἀρμοζεῖν αὐτῶν*, lib. vi. The Abbe Bleterie affirms, that he was round-shouldered, and so depicted on his coins; *il avoit les epaules routees, comme on le voit aussi sur ses medailles*.—*Hist. de Jov.* p. 10.

army, a choice to which he acceded without opposition, though he was the elder; but because the new Augustus was yet an infant, he managed for him the affairs of the west, with great prudence and valour, though himself a very young man. Here he had several encounters with the barbarians of Germany, particularly with a nation called the Sensitioni, who crossed the Rhine into the province of Gaul, inhabited and cultivated by the Romans: these swarms of barbarians, crowding into the Roman territories, and carrying with them destruction and desolation, he totally defeated, like another Marius, and killed in one day 30,000. To the survivors he allotted lands, and taught the fierce robbers to prefer cultivating the arts of peace and agriculture, to the state of predatory war in which they had hitherto lived. As his presence, however, was confined to the west, the eastern parts of the empire, under the infant minority of the emperor, was greatly disturbed, particularly Thrace, the region of the capital. Conscious, therefore, of his youth and inexperience at the age of twenty to manage such weighty and embarrassing affairs, he sent for the celebrated Theodosius, who had already acquired such reputation in Spain, and confided to his care the management of the eastern part

of the empire, about the year 379. From this time he devoted himself to the arts of peace, in framing excellent laws, and in extending the belief and practice of the doctrines and duties of Christianity. His conviction of the benefits derived to mankind from its promulgation and adoption, by the sovereigns of the world, he impressed on his coins, calling the time in which he lived, a *new age*, of which Christianity was the glory, and this was the first public recognition of it, as an epocha. While engaged in promoting these excellent objects, Maximus, who governed Britain, revolted; and having passed over into Gaul, seduced from their allegiance many of the native states, and advanced to Lutetia or Paris. Gratianus, now devoted to the arts of peace, was unprepared to meet this sudden attack, and was compelled to seek his safety by a precipitate retreat to Lugdunum or Lyons. Here, abandoned by many of his adherents, he was overtaken by his enemies, and assassinated by the perfidity of Andragethes in the year 384, in the 25th year of his age, having reigned from the death of his father, seven years and seven months.

The annexed coin, No. 31, represents the Emperor in his robes having on his head a di-

adem of pearls, with the legend **DoMINVS GRA-TIANVVS AGVSTO GENITVS AVGVSTVS**, "Lord Gratian Augustus the Son of Augustus." On the obverse **GLORIA NOVI SAECVLI**, "The glory of a new age."* On the field **OFFICINA III.** "Coined at the third mint." In the exergue **CONStANTINOOPLEWS OBSIGNATA**, or, according to others, **CIVITATVM ORIENTIS NEGOCIATORVM B**, for **SECvNDVM TRIBVTVM**, "The second tribute of the merchants of the east."

THEODOSIUS THE GREAT.

From the reign of Jovian, Christianity was established as the accredited religion of the vast Roman empire, without any attempt made by a succeeding emperor to extinguish it, notwithstanding efforts on the part of the people to revive heathenism. Theodosius was born in Spain, in the year 346. He was appointed by Gratian

* This coin has been like others, subject to a variety of conjectures as to the reading and meaning of the legends, both of the obverse and reverse. I have adopted that which seems to me most simple and suitable, agreeing with the conclusion of Jobert, that though,—on ne peut au temps de Gratien, trouver aucune raison de dire qu'on commence un nouveau Siecle, par rapport a aucune autre Epoque; on ne scauroit rien trouver plus raisonnable, que de dire que c' est le commencement du Second Siecle, auquel on a eu le bonheur d'avoir des Princes Chrétiens; a qui l' on peut frapper des medailles avec le nom de Jesus Christ —La Science des. Med. tom ii. p. 324.

to avenge the death of Valens, who had been slain by the Goths, and conducted himself with such prudence, that he was called to the imperial throne. Here he was a strenuous supporter of Christianity. He issued many decrees against the Arian heresy, still professed, and established the orthodox faith in the Trinity, as decreed at the Council of Nicæa. Some attempts were made in his reign to revive the heathen superstitions at Rome and in the provinces, but he effectually prevented them. The senate at Rome, who still had a tendency to their ancient rites, requested that they might be permitted to re-erect the altar to VICTORY, which had been removed; this he strictly prohibited, and about the same time he totally abolished in Egypt the worship of Serapis and other gods, issuing the memorable decree, that no one should presume in the Roman dominions "to worship an idol by sacrifice." It was on this occasion that he surmounted the globe with a cross, as is seen on his coins. The globe had been a favourite emblem of the Roman emperors, some of whom surmounted it with the Roman eagle; some with the figure of Victory; and the family of Constantine with a phoenix: but Theodosius

placed on it the cross, intimating the triumph of Christianity over the whole earth. The originator of this device has been a matter of dispute with Antiquarians. Du Cange affirming, that Valentinian was the first who used it, and Bandurius, that a globe surmounted by a cross is to be found on a coin of Jovian. The coins alluded to, however, are said to be very rare, and are not mentioned by Medobarbus, &c. If the device had been used before it seems to have been forgotten or neglected till Theodosius gave it currency and celebrity : on two gold coins of different sizes in my collection it is to be found, and I have not seen it on any earlier. Before the time of Theodosius a Victory surmounting a cross was universal ; after this time it disappeared, and the cross was always seen in its place. He seems therefore to have first established the use of that emblem, which other Christian monarchs, as well as our own, bear at this day at their coronation. From this period heathen mythology sunk into general contempt, and forsaking the cities, where the inquisitive minds of cultivated men had detected and exposed its absurdities, it retired among the remote ‘ Pagi,’ or villages, where it continued to linger a little longer, and

its professors were denominated 'Pagani,* or 'Pagans,' and the superstition itself 'Paganism,' an appellation which it retains to this day. Theodosius divided his empire between his sons Arcadius and Honorius, giving to the former the East, of which Constantinople was the capital; and to the latter the West, of which Rome was the capital. The Christian world was thus divided into two empires and two churches; the first distinction has been long since obliterated, but the second yet subsists.† He died in 395, after a reign of sixteen years, having justly acquired the appellation of the *Great*.

The annexed coin, No. 32, represents the emperor in armour, with a spear and shield: the legend, DOMINVS THEODOSIVS, PERPETVVS, FELIX, AVGVSTVS. The reverse represents him in armour, holding in his right hand the Labarum, and in his left the globe, surmounted by a cross; beside him is a star,‡

* Quod Religio Christiana in urbes recepta, Pagani gentiles ritus diu retinuerunt.

† The separation of the churches did not entirely take place till 366, when Basilijus, by the influence of Photius, completely effected it.

‡ The star was placed on the coins of Julius Cæsar in allusion to his supposed descent from Venus, and it seems to have been hence adopted by succeeding emperors.

with the legend, GLORIA ORVIS for ORBIS TERRARVM—"the Glory of the earth." In the exergue the letters THESALONONICÆ OBSIGNATA, "coined at Thessalonica."

JUSTINIAN.

For two centuries nothing very memorable occurred in the eastern empire, nor did any of the emperors distinguish themselves till the reign of Justinian. Justinian was born in Thrace, and was raised to the imperial purple in 527, being 45 years old, though some of his coins represent him as a younger man. He was of a very religious turn; nevertheless he married Theodora, an actress of a very profligate life, who gained great influence over him in persecuting heretics. The laws of the empire were at this time in great confusion, and he engaged Trebonius, an eminent lawyer, to prepare a compilation of them; then a digest or pandect; and finally, institutes, or an elementary treatise. The Code, Pandects, and Institutes of Justinian, form the great body of civil jurisprudence recognized at this day. He was also the first who introduced the silk from Persia, and so it has passed into Europe. His piety was displayed on several occasions: he re-edified many churches, and among the rest

that of Sancta Sophia, as it now exists at Constantinople. He erected a statue in the Augusteion, to which he gave the globe and cross which others had confined to their coins:* he seemed ambitious of distinction in minor points; he modified the form of the cross into that which still continues, in the eastern church, to be peculiarly called the Greek cross,† and he bent down the tiara, so as to give it the shape of the modern crown surmounted by a cross, as used at present by Christian monarchs. These circumstances are commemorated on his coins.

The annexed coin, No. 33, represents on the obverse the emperor robed, his head covered with a cross-bearing crown of his new construction, and holding in his right hand the cross-bearing globe. The legend, in very rude characters, DOMINVS IVSTINIANVS, PER-

* This statue in the Augusteion is thus described by two writers: καὶ τῇ μὲν ἄριστερᾳ χεὶρὶ φέρει σφαῖραν ἑμπεπλεγμένην τοῦ σταυροῦ ἐν αὐτῇ. "And in his left hand he holds a globe with a cross fixed on it." Suidas Lexicon. art. Ἰουστινιανός. Ἐχεῖ δὲ οὐκ ἐξίφρος οὔτε δούρατος οὔτε ἄλλο των ὅπλων οὔδεν, ἀλλὰ σταῦρος αὐτῷ ἐπὶ τοῦ πόλου ἐπικεῖται. "He holds in his hand neither sword nor spear, nor any other weapon but a cross standing on a globe.—Procop: de Ædific: Justin. lib. i. c. 2.

† In all the modern Greek standards I have seen, the figure of this cross was exactly preserved by the insurgents. It represents the three crosses at the crucifixion; that of Christ is in the middle, those of the malefactors at each side.

PETVVS, PIVS, AVGVSTVS. On the reverse is the Greek cross, standing on a pedestal of steps. The legend, rude and imperfect, VICTORIA AVGVSTI; in the exergue, CONStANTINOPOLEVS OBsignATA, "coined at Constantinople."

One of the great and laudable labours of Justinian, was the reparation of such cities as had been destroyed either by the violence of the enemy or the convulsions of nature. The towns of Syria had suffered greatly in both ways, particularly Antioch. This city had been rendered famous in the early annals of Christianity, as the place where its doctrines met with the earliest reception, and its professors were first called Christians, and where St. Peter established the first Christian see. It was for these reasons held in high respect by the early Christians, and we have seen with what determination the inhabitants had dissented from, and exposed the apostacy of Julian. This city the pious Justinian took under his especial care. He turned the river Orontes, so as to bring it to the walls of the town: he paved the streets with immense blocks, so large, that Procopius says, each of them was a burthen for a four horse cart: he repaired the parts

that had been burnt: he re-edified the whole town after it had been shattered with an earthquake: and he adorned it with two splendid temples, one to the Deipara, or the Virgin mother of God, and the other to the arch angel Michael.* Having done all this he changed the name from Antioch, by which it was known and recognized on the coins of all his predecessors, to Θεουπολις “the city of God;†” and to commemorate the fact, his coins of that city are marked $\Sigma\text{ΗΕΥΡ}$, and so the practice was continued generally by his successor. He died in the year 565, in the 83d year of his age, worn out with cares and anxieties.

The annexed coin, No. 34, represents on the obverse, the emperor with a crested crown, holding in one hand a globe-bearing cross, and on the arm of the other a shield; the legend as before. On the reverse are the letters ANNO xxxi, the year of his reign, and the Greek capital I, supposed by Jobert to stand for 10,

* Procopius de *Ædific. Justiniani*, lib. ii. c. 10. Evagr. H. E. lib. iv. c. 6.

† Θεουπολις τῆς ἑω πολις, ἣτις ἔξ' Ἀντιοχίας μετὰ τὸν σείσμον ἀνομάσθη ἀπὸ Ἰουστινιανου. “Theopolis, a city of the east, which was so called by Justian, instead of Antioch, after the earthquake.”—Steph: Byzant: de urbibus. v: Θεουπολις.

the number of small coins for which it was exchanged. In the exergue is THET for Θεουπολις, the name he had conferred on Antioch.

FOCAS.

Flavius Focas was only a centurion. In the year 602 the Emperor Mauricius directed the army in the Autumn to pass the Ister, and take up their winter quarters on the other side; they mutined at this order, and placed at their head Focas. Under him they marched on Constantinople, entered and took the city, and then elected their leader Emperor for his services. Mauricius, despairing of safety, fled across the Bosphorus to Chalcedon, where he was seized with his children, and his whole family was put to death, by order of the new emperor, with the exception of one person. Chosroes, the Persian king, wishing to avenge the death of his friend Mauricius, totally defeated the Roman armies, and carried devastation into the eastern provinces. When their general, Narcetes, returned to Constantinople, he ordered him to be burned alive in the market-place. The army became now discontented at the progress of the Persian war, and the Prætorian guard burst into open mutiny, setting fire to

the emperor's palace, opening the prisons, and liberating the malefactors. But they were subdued ; many were beheaded, many were cast into the sea, and the rest were disbanded. A fresh insurrection, however, broke out at Alexandria, where Heraclius commanded ; and he having advanced from Africa, entered Constantinople, seized the person of the tyrant whom he immediately slew ; and having cut off his head, ordered it to be carried into the city, and his body to be burned in the cattle-market. He reigned seven years and seven months, leaving behind him a very atrocious character. His coins generally represent him as he was, a man of a truculent aspect, indicative of the unrelenting ferocity of his mind. Yet at the same time he was careful of minute observances, and they all exhibit some emblem of Christianity, in which, like Justinian, he seemed fond of displaying his piety. It had been the custom of the emperors preceding him, to bear in their hand a wand, flattened at the top, for a sceptre ; and this custom was very ancient among the Greeks. The sceptre was called *Ναρθηξ*, because it was made of the stem of a plant of that name, called by the Romans, *Ferula* ; and hence the emperors themselves were called *Narthecophoroi*.

There is an island named Oxia, in the sea of Marmora, at a short distance from Constantinople, where the Greek emperors had a palace and made it their summer residence. It is remarkable that this island abounds this day with this plant, which supplied the sovereigns with sceptres, nor is it to be found any where else that I know of, in the country about Constantinople. From the time of Theodosius, this sceptre was usually superseded on the coins by a ball surmounted by a long cross ; but Focas was the first who substituted a cross, without a globe, for his sceptre ; and this atrocious man seemed to have taken particular care to have emblems of Christianity displayed in every form about his person.

The annexed coin, No. 35, represents on the obverse the emperor with a full front in his robes ; his head covered with a cross-bearing crown, and in his right hand his newly devised cross-bearing sceptre. The legend DOMINVS FOCAS PERPETVVS AVGVSTVS. On the reverse is an angel, holding in one hand a cross, surmounted with a P, the monogram of the emperor's name, which in Greek was always, and in Latin sometimes spelled with a PH ; in the other a cross-bearing globe. The legend,

with a mixture of Gothic letters, VICTORIA AVGUSTI. In the exergue CONStANTINO-POLEWS OBSIGNATA.

JUSTINIAN RHINOMETUS.

The introduction of images and pictures into the Grecian churches had now become very prevalent, and the emperors commemorated the practice by impressing similar ones on their coins. Justinianus, son of Constantinus Pogonatus, was called to the imperial throne in 685. He was a man of cruel and implacable character, and was attacked and taken prisoner by Leontius, who mutilated him by cutting off his nose, and from thence he was called *Rhinometus*. He was afterwards overtaken by a storm at sea, and his confessor directed him to pray for and promise forgiveness to his enemies. His prayer was, " May I now perish if I spare one of them !" which determination he religiously kept when restored to the crown. He affected, notwithstanding, much piety, and was the first to introduce upon his coins the image of our Saviour, copied, it should appear, from a brazen statue of him over one of the churches, which was afterwards the cause of much tumult. Justinian died in the year 711, leaving behind him a very atrocious character.

In the annexed coin, No. 36, the obverse represents the bust of Christ, holding in his left hand the Gospel, or perhaps the Prophets, which he seems to be explaining by the pointed finger of his right hand ; his head is crowned with rays. The legend, with a mixture of Greek and Gothic letter, JESUS CHRISTVS, REX REGNANTIVM—" Jesus Christ, the King of kings." On the reverse the emperor is represented in barred vestments, his head surmounted with a common cross, and holding in his right hand the cross of Justinian. The legend, DOMINVS IVSTINIANVS SERVVS CHRISTI—" Lord Justinian, servant of Christ." In the exergue CONOB, as in the former.

LEO AND CONSTANTINE.

The excess of images and pictures, now introduced into the Christian church, excited in no small degree the concern of those who thought them inimical to pure worship, and a violation of the commands of God ; a reformation, therefore, commenced in the eastern church, similar to that which many centuries after took place in the western ; which was warmly supported by the Emperor Leo.

Leo II. called Isaurus, from the place of his

birth in Asia Minor, was originally named Conon; but took the appellation of Leo when crowned emperor in 717. He began his reformation by assembling a council of bishops and senators, who both concurred with him in the propriety of removing all images, from the altars and sanctuaries of Christian churches. In this reformation he was violently opposed by Gregory II. pope of Rome, who excited the Latin people to revolt against him, and influenced Germanus, the patriarch of Constantinople, to resist his authority. He exiled Germanus, and sent a fleet to reduce his revolted subjects in Italy; but the fleet was lost in a storm in the Adriatic, and an earthquake at the same time devastated Constantiple: these two circumstances were assigned by his opponents as evidence of God's anger against him. A sect of Christians at this time started up, who were called Iconoclasts or image-breakers. They entered the churches, and like Knox's reformers, and Cromwell's puritans, defaced or destroyed every image they met. The emperor and his ministers were supposed to favour these men, whose zeal often carried them beyond the bounds of discretion.* There stood over one of the

* The number of images destroyed on this occasion is thus justly regretted by a Byzantine historian:—*Ἐπὶ Λέοντος τοῦ*

principal churches, an image of Christ, held in high respect by the people. Not content with destroying the images of saints, they tore down this also, as an idolatrous exhibition. The Latin writers, as may be supposed, were loud in their condemnation of this impiety. They asserted that Leo had secret connection with the Arabs and Jews, and with an atrocious sect called Manichæans, prevalent in the part of Asia Minor where he was born, and that he acted with a view to extirpate Christianity altogether. He, however, persevered in his reformation till his death, which happened in the year 741.

He was succeeded by his son Constantine Copronymus, called so in derision, because, as the Latin writers assert, he defiled the font at his baptism, no vain omen of his impiety,* a token that he would pollute and defile the church hereafter. He persevered in the same course as his father had begun, till he had eradicated the traces of superstition, and restored

Ἰσαῦρου πολλὰ θέαματα ἀρχαῖα παρελυθήσαν καὶ ἡφανίσθησαν διὰ τὸ παντελῶς ἀλόγισον αὐτοῦ—"Under Leo the Isaurian many ancient statues were destroyed, and disappeared through his extreme folly." The exceeding scarcity of sculptured remains of ancient art in Constantinople at the present day, is attributable as much to this cause as to the ravages of the Turks and Crusaders.

* *Haud vanum impietatis omen.*

the worship of the church to its primitive purity and simplicity. That their object was not to abolish Christianity, but to purify it, appears from their inscriptions and coins. They erased all impressions of the Virgin, and even of our Saviour * as idolatrous ; but they retained every where the great sign of salvation, the cross.

There stood till very lately in Constantinople, an inscription over the great gate of the palace called Chalces, strongly expressing their sentiments on this subject, and indicating that their hostility was not directed against a sacred emblem, but against the unworthy and degrading representation of the living God, by an idol of lifeless matter. Under a large cross sculptured over the entrance of the palace were the following words :—

ΑΦΩΝΟΝΕΙΔΟΣΚΑΙΠΝΟΗΣΕΞΗΡΜΕΝΟΝ
ΧΡΙΣΤΟΝΓΡΑΦΕΣΘΑΙΜΗΦΕΡΩΝΟΔΕΣΠΟΤΗΣ
ΤΑΗΓΕΗΡΑΤΑΙΣΓΡΑΦΑΙΣΠΑΤΟΥΜΕΝΗ.
ΛΕΩΝΣΤΝΤΙΩΤΩΝΕΩΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΩ
ΣΤΑΤΡΩΝΧΑΡΑΤΤΕΙΤΟΝΤΡΙΣΟΛΒΙΟΝΤΤΠΟΝ
ΚΑΤΧΗΜΑΠΙΣΤΩΝΕΝΠΤΑΛΙΣΑΝΑΚΤΟΡΩΝ

* A coin with our Saviour's image, not having the name of any emperor, is attributed to him by Du Cange, but very properly rejected by Bandurius, as altogether inconsistent with his known character and conduct. Another with a similar reverse, and having Leo's name on the obverse, is justly supposed by Pellerin, to belong to Leo VI., called the Sage.

“The emperor cannot endure that Christ should be sculptured, a mute and lifeless image graven on earthly materials. But Leo and his son, young Constantine, have at their gates engraved the thrice blessed representation of the cross, the glory of believing monarchs.”

Copronymus died in the year 775.

The annexed coin, No. 37, from which the image of Christ is excluded, and replaced by that of the reigning monarch, exhibits on the obverse, the emperor Leo ; his head covered with the crown of Justinian surmounted with a cross. His body is clothed in barred vestments, and in his right hand he holds the Greek cross. The legend, in rude characters, CONSTANTINO LEON PIIS ANNOS MVLTOS—“to Constantine and Leo the Pious, many years.* On the reverse are both Leo and his son Constantine, crowned and clothed as in the obverse, with a Greek legend, expressed in rude Latin letters, CONSTANTINOS SUN LEON O NEOS—“young Constantine with Leo.”

* Khell in his supplement to Vaillant explains this legend, and says it alludes to the destruction he meditated for the Catholic religion. In antica annos multos caractere barbaro ei comprehendantur cives et monetarii ; quibus votis ad perniciem quidem religionis Catholicæ eventus satis commode respondit.—Sup : Vail : 4to. p. 303.

JOHANNES ZEMISCES.

The reformation in the Greek church continued with various success for more than two centuries. Leo V. called Armenus, was so eager to effect it, that he is strongly reprobated by the Latin writers, who say—"he raged with every kind of atrocity against the sacred Catholic images."* He was assassinated at the altar, with the cross in his hand. Michael Balbus, however, allowed, in 820, the worship of images to every man's conscience, but strictly prohibited their restoration in churches; till at length Theodora, during the minority of her son Michael III. replaced them—exhibiting, as the Latin historian say—"a singular example of a woman who restored the worship of images."†

The zeal of the reformers now abated, the constant reclamation of the clergy of the Latin church prevailed, and images were again generally introduced. Johannes Zemisces slew the emperor Nicephoras Phocas in his palace, and was himself saluted emperor by his adherents,

* In sacras imagines Catholicas omni atrocitate bacchatus est.

† Singulare exemplum fœminæ quæ sacrarum imaginum cultus restituit.

in the year 969 ; but the patriarch refused to confirm their choice till he had expiated his guilt. He therefore bestowed all his goods to feed the poor, and performed other penances, when he was at length accepted of. Among other acts of piety recorded of him, is the restitution of the statue of the Virgin. He had defeated the Bulgarians, who had made an inroad into the territories of the empire, and found among their spoils a chariot, on which he placed an image of the Virgin of great reputed sanctity, and made with her a triumphal entry into the city. This he deposited with great solemnity in the principal church, where it was kept like that of Minerva, as the great palladium of the state. This image he has represented on his coins, and was the first who introduced the practice. He also restored the image of Christ, being the first who devoted both the obverse and reverse to his image and inscription. He died by poison in the year 975.

The annexed coin, No. 38, exhibits on the obverse the image of our Saviour, with a book, his head circled with glory—on each side is IC, XC, the Greek initials and termination of Jesus Christ ; without a legend. The obverse represents the Virgin, her hands expanded, and

her head surrounded with a nimbus,* with the letters MP, ΘΥ Μητρὶ Θεοῦ, "the mother of God."

From this time till the destruction of the lower empire by the Turks, the coins that have been found are very irregular and imperfect; they either have no legend to designate to whom they belong, or they are wrapped up in an obscure and uncertain monogram, that at best is but a subject of mere conjecture; few coins of the great families of the Comneni and the Paleologi are to be found; and one known to belong to the last Constantine, has not yet, I believe, been discovered.† The image of the Virgin, still held her place on the coins, though a compromise was made with the churches, which continues at the present day. The Greeks, moreover, in their contests, succeeded in establishing many points of doctrine and dis-

* The nimbus or glory which now encircles the heads of saints only, was in the lower empire a mark of regal distinction. It is seen round the heads of Constantine, Mauritius, Focas, and others; and appears to have been a modification of the rayed crowns of the Roman emperors. But from the time of Johannes Zimisces, and Justinian Rhinometus it was exclusively confined to Christ, the Virgin, St. Demetrius and other saints in the Greek church, and so it has been adopted and continued in the Latin.

† Du Cange exhibits a large medal of John Paleologus. He also gives a coin of Michael Paleologus, though no inscription sanctions the conjecture. Mionnet mentions one of Constantine Paleologus, but rejects it as spurious.

cipline, approximating to those which the Protestants adopted at the Reformation. They reject the infallibility of any individual in their church. They do not hold as canonical the Apochrycal books. They do not believe in an intermediate state, where sins are purged by fire or other means.* They use leavened bread formed into a loaf at the Eucharist.† They give the elements of both kinds to the laity. Their secular priests may be married men.‡ All statues or sculptured representations are excluded from their churches ; but their place is supplied by abundance of pictures, which are no less the objects of their respect and devotion. The Greeks, with their usual refinement, adhere to the letter of the law and reject all graven images ; but it seems a strange anomaly that those who profess to feel a horror at bowing to wood and stone, should kneel without scruple to paint and canvass.

* Purgatory, or a place where sin is purged by fire, or other means, was allowed by Origen, but condemned by the 2nd council of Constantinople.

† The bread is not a common loaf, but made for the purpose ; having on it the letters found on the coins $\frac{IC}{N}$ $\frac{XC}{K}$ *Ιησους Χριστος νικα*, "Jesus Christ conquers."

‡ They may be married when ordained, but cannot marry afterwards.

ADDENDA.

It may not be irrelevant to conclude the account of amulets by a brief notice of the opinions still entertained in the East on the same subject. A conviction of the prophylactic efficacy of certain words or symbols, in averting evil, is still the universal notion entertained by every class I have met, either Turks, Jews, or Christians. The former sell these charms publicly at their mosques, and I have caused to be purchased for me at the mosque of Santa Sophia, several written amulets, composed of verses from the Koran and the 99 Epithets of Alla, accompanied with an assurance that whoever wore them were protected against all the evils moral and physical therein specified.

Some of these evils are enumerated as follow, for all which I have obtained talismans or amulets. The malignity of demons, serpents, scorpions, and venemous animals; fraud, calumny, sudden death, sword and lance; 77 and 366 diseases.

Many of them are particularized, such as the worm of hell (tape worm) colic, head-ache, sore eyes, lumbago, any affections of the head, teeth, eyes, throat, neck, shoulders, ears, breast, navel, belly, hands, and feet. One talisman promises to protect the wearer, if stones rained down from the sky; another assures him it will cause his word to be always respected, and a third affirms that the angel Gabriel has promised Mahomet that the bearer of it shall enter Paradise looking in the face of two beautiful damsels, one on his right hand and the other on his left. But the evil most dreaded, and the pregnant source of all the rest, is an evil eye. This is a superstition perhaps the earliest entertained in the world, and the most widely diffused, and which yet continues in the East in its full force, firmly fixed in the minds of every class and denomination of the people, who evince an extraordinary solicitude to evade its effects, which are not confined to any particular injury, but extend to every misfortune which a man can sustain in his person, property, or destiny. One of these is very remarkable, and the Turks in particular are most anxious to avert it. When a wedding takes place they imagine that some person in the company may, by a glance of the eye, at once

destroy their connubial happiness, and stories of this kind are every day told and believed. One of the janissaries of the English palace communicated to me a case of this kind which had just happened to his son-in-law, a fine young man, who lay under this influence but was afterwards restored by the efficacy of some charms made for him by a dervish. Imagination had probably a powerful effect in causing and curing the malady. To avert these and similar consequences various talismans are devised : the most common is a little figure of blue beads or glass, in various shapes, suspended to the thing to be protected. It is imagined that this conspicuous object will attract the first glance of the evil eye, and so its malignity will be expended on it.

This is universally attached, not only to animate but inanimate objects. Horses and buffaloes, ships and houses, are equally guarded in this way. When a child is to be shielded from harm, amulets of blue china or glass in the form of a human hand are hung on the head. This is called Kef Marjam on the "hand of Mary,"*

* There is a beautiful and fragrant shrub very common in all the banks of the rivers in the East—the *Vitex Agnus Castus*. The digitate leaves of this resembling a hand, the Turks also call Kef Marjam, and attribute to it the virtues of an amulet.

and supposed to be the Virgin's hand held over the infant, and it is generally used by the Armenians. But besides these and similar ones, the Greeks have sculptured gems inscribed and used as those of the Gnostics, and differing only in the better influence under which they are supposed to act. One of these in my collection is cut on a cornelian, to which the possessor attributed great virtue. It contains an inscription surmounted by a cross, and terminated by the date. The inscription is Despinoo Thanasi, the name of the person who is put under the protection of the cross. Many Gnostic amulets bear the name of the person in a similar manner.

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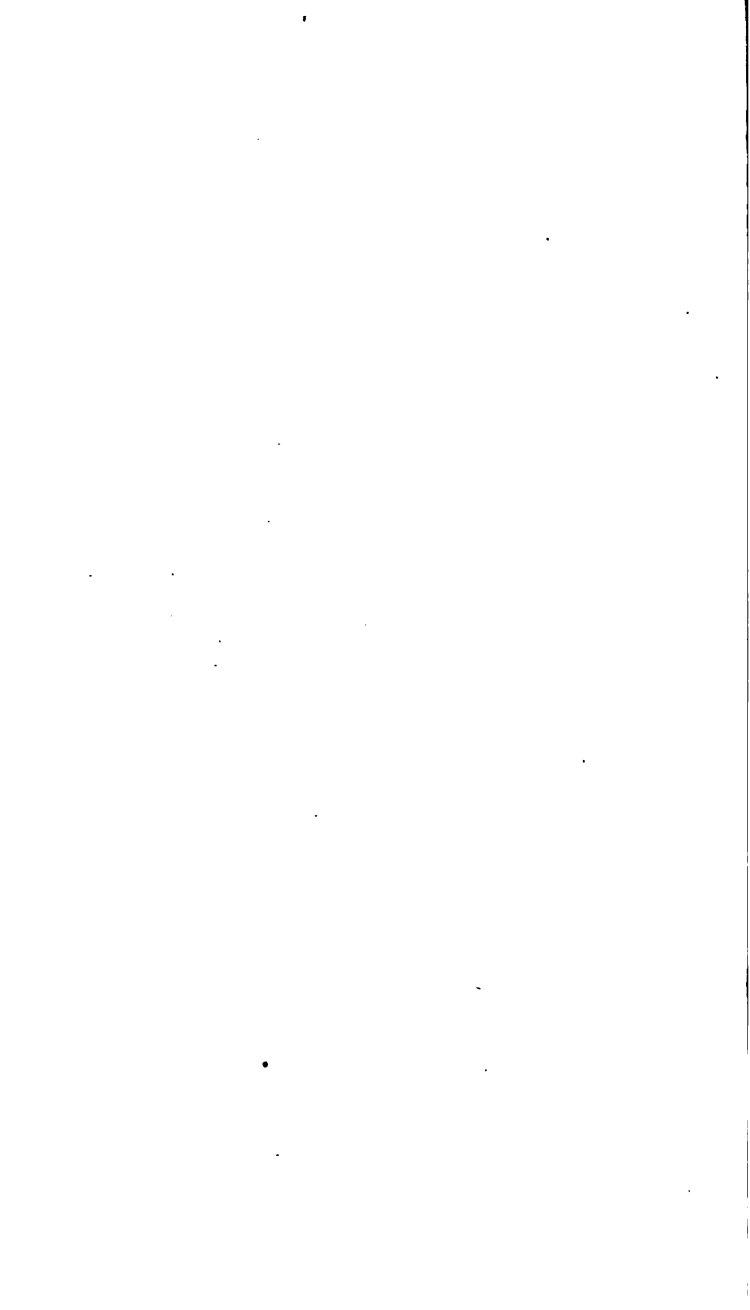
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ERRATA.

- Page 8, line 6—After mysteries of the Cabala, read 'the \aleph aleph, stands for the initial of Adonai, Lord, a common word on Gnostic amulets.'
- P. 11, 6 note—for *lest*, read *let*.—P. 27, 12 note—for *apochryphal translations*, read *apochryphal traditions*.—P. 40, 2 note—for 'from these principalities,' read 'from these, principalities'.—P. 81, 10 note—for time fixed *as*, read time fixed *on*.—P. 83, last note—for *decess*, read *decees*.—P. 88, 6 note—for *ome* doubt, read *some* doubt. —P. 111, l. 8—for *diamond* of pearls, read *diadem* of pearls.—P. 111, l. 19—for the *ceining* of Augustus, read the *coming* of Augustus.





RW in locum del.

on Stone by T. Kelly

*Elevation of the Front of a Temple erected to Christian Worship by the
EMPEROR JOVIAN, A.D. 364 as it stands at present in the
ISLAND of CORFU with an inscription commemorating the Event.*

Whitlock & Goodman's Lithog 14 Paternoster Row



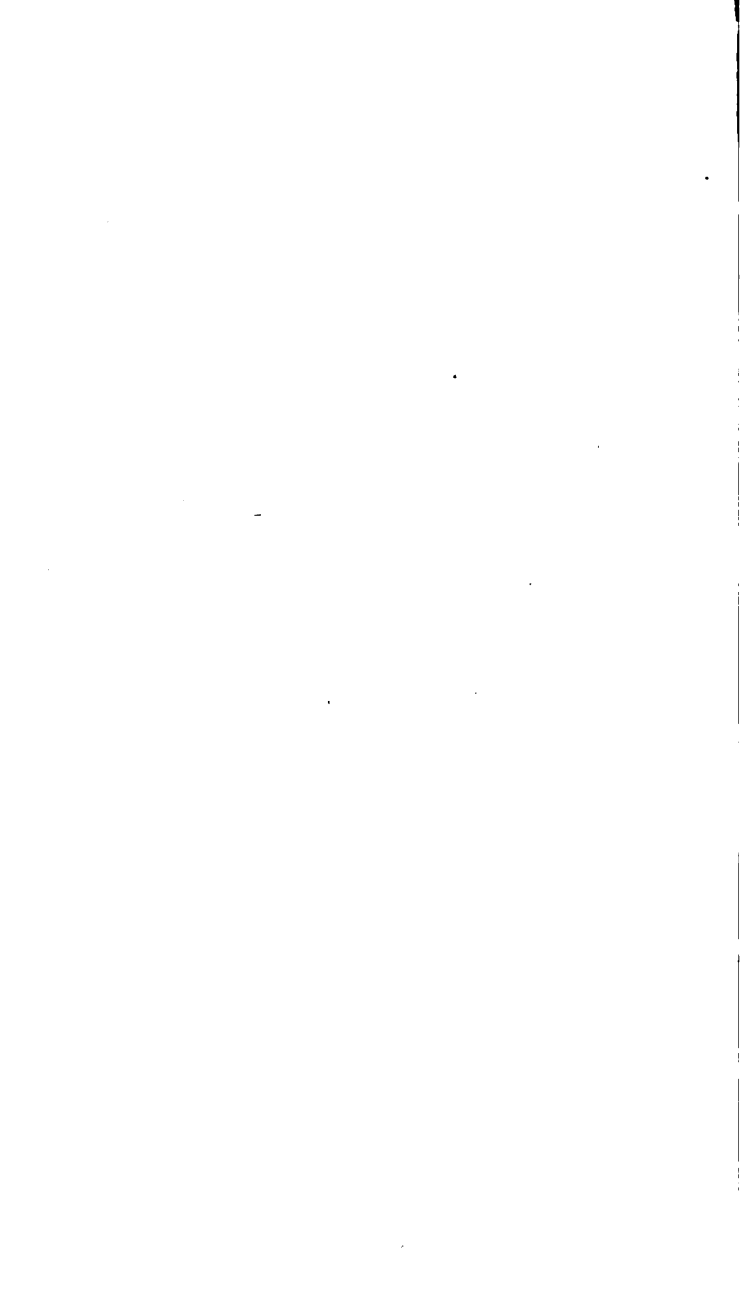
Bronze.



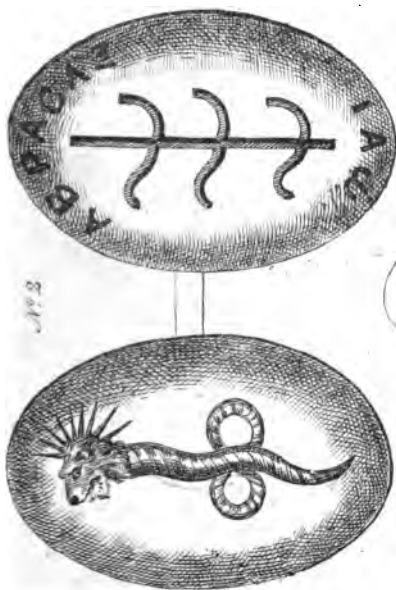
Actual size

T. Kelly del.

Whitlock & Co. Boston Mass. U.S.A.

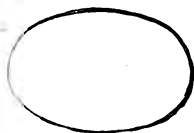


Chrysopepla rufa.



No 2

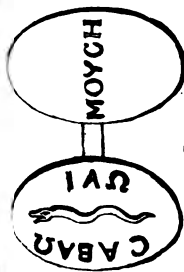
size



Actual



N^o 3.

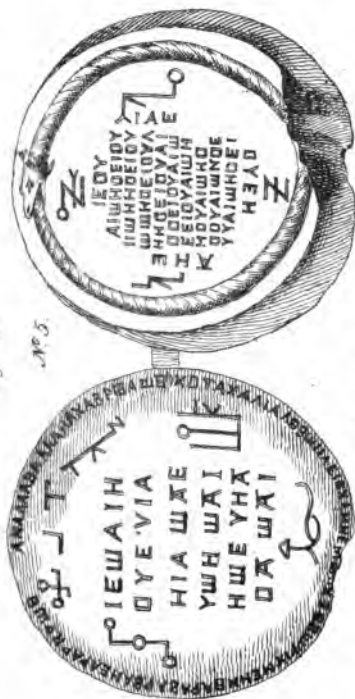


N^o 4.



Agate.

№ 5.



Actual size.

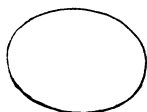


Blood Stone.

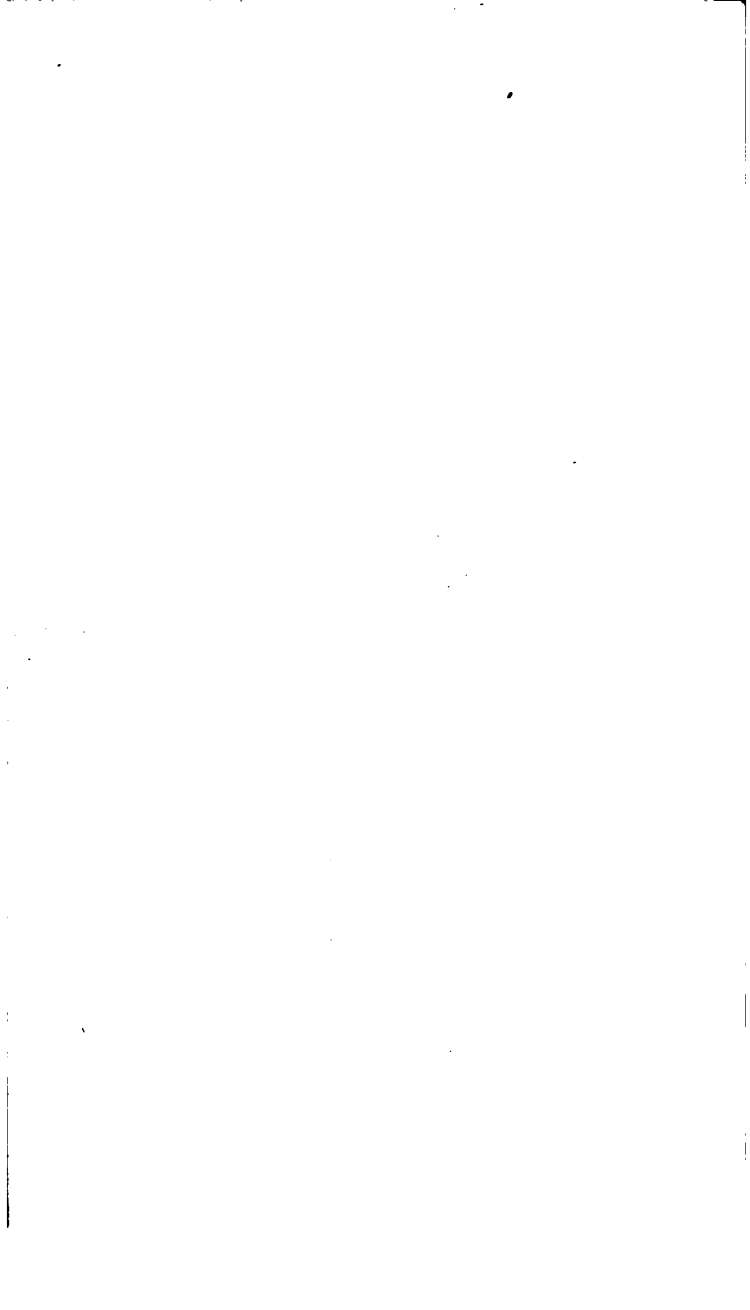
N^o 5.

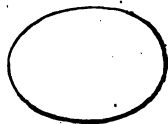
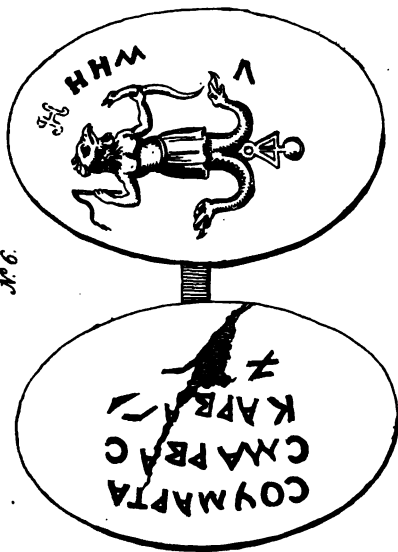


size.



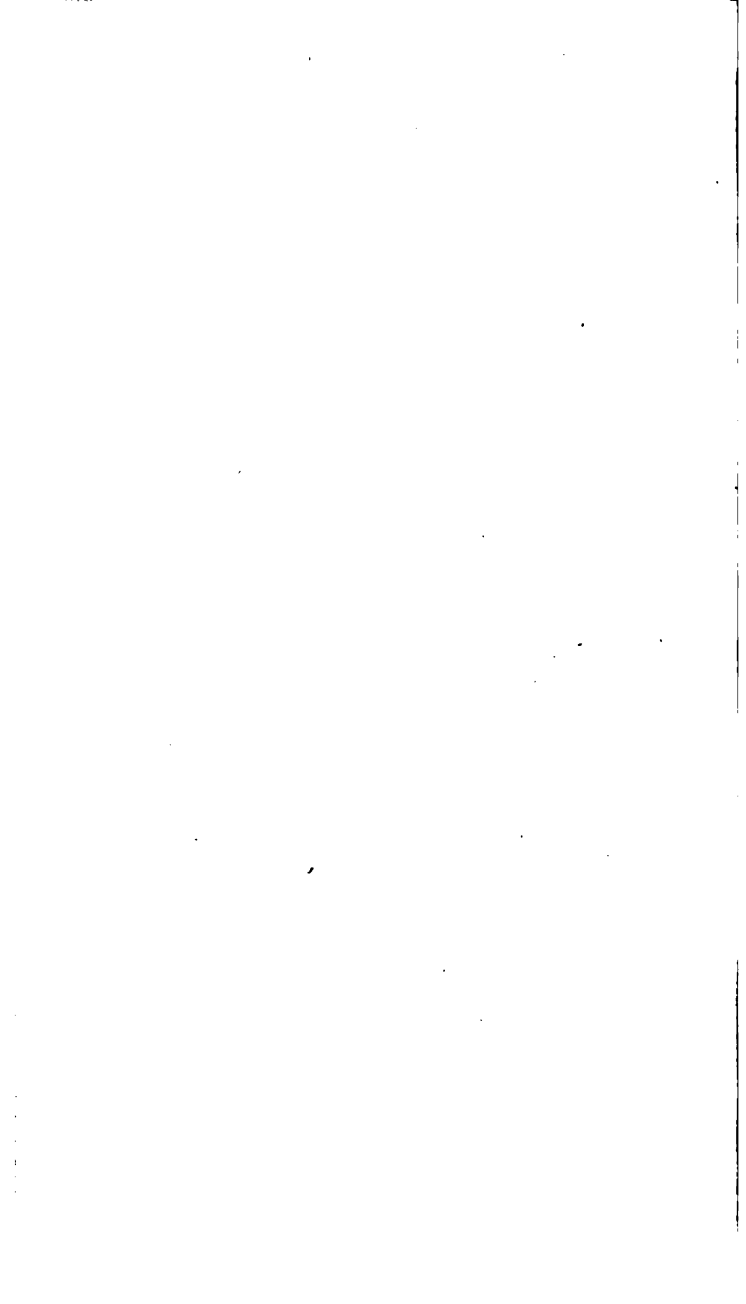
Actual





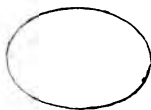
Actual

size.



Ruby Blond Stone

No. 7.



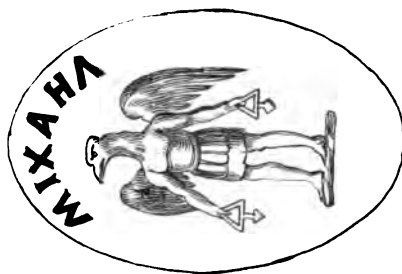
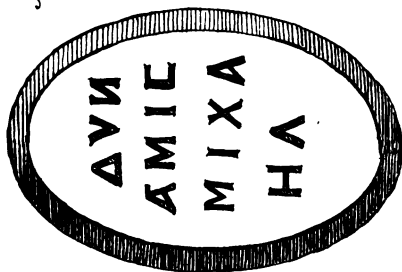
Actual

size



Basalt.

№ 8.



Actual

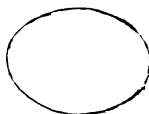
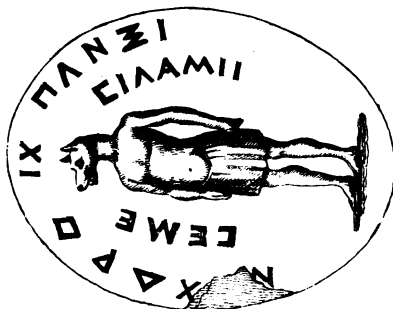
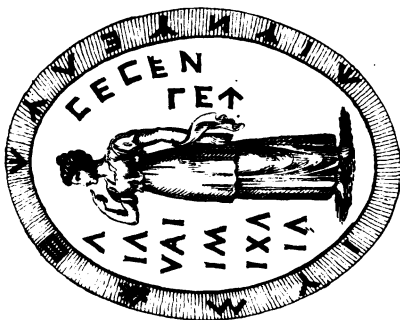


size.



Basalt.

Nº 9.



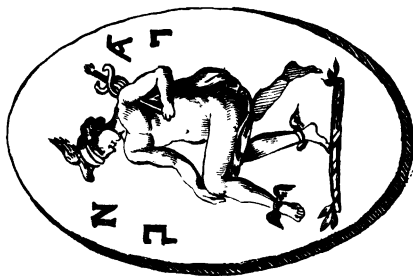
Actual

size.

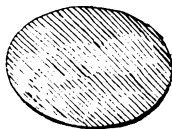


Cornelian.

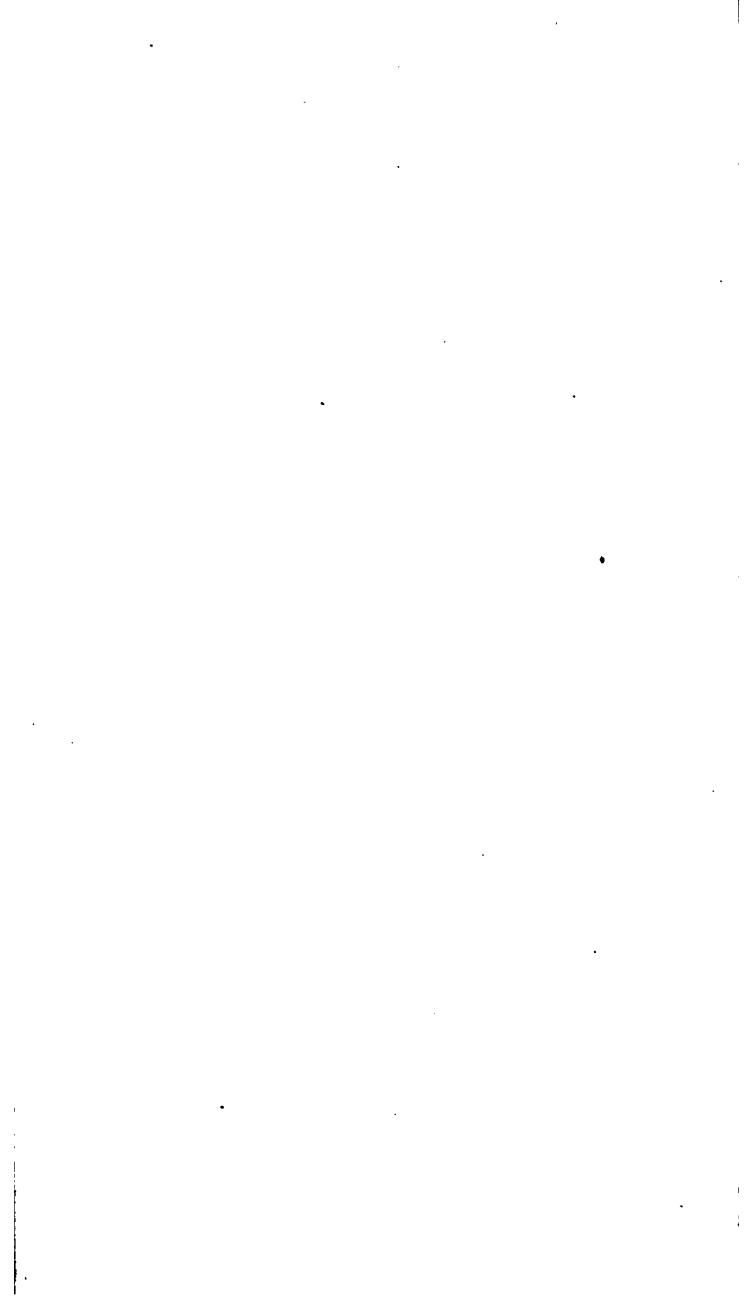
N. 10.



Actual

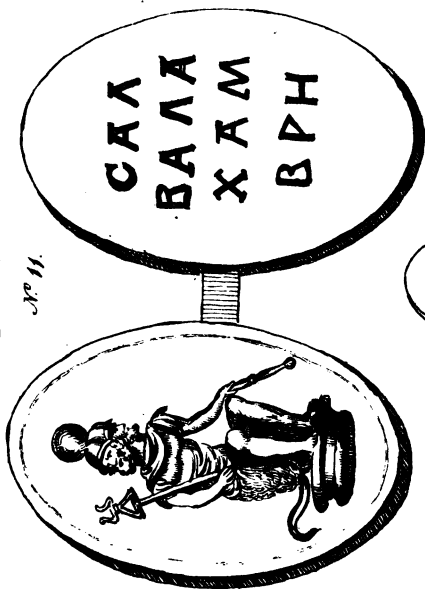


Size.



Blood Stone

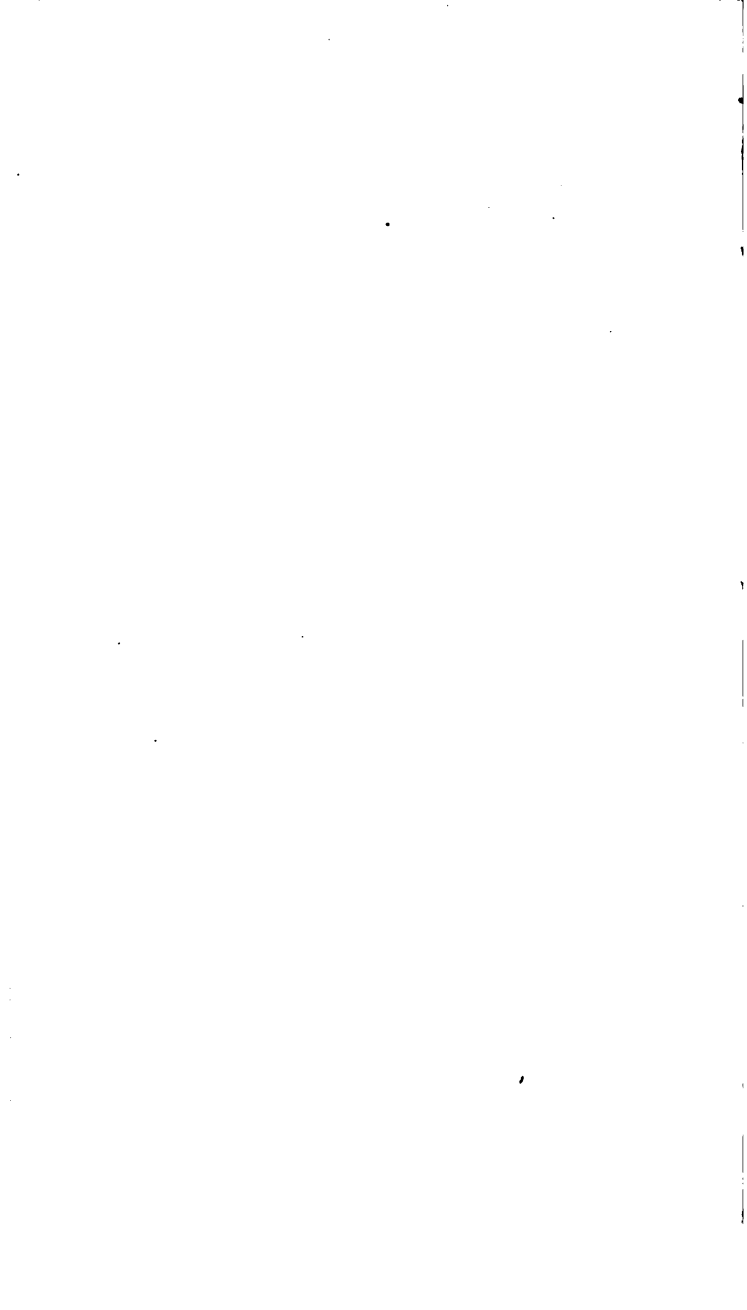
Nº 11.



size



Actual



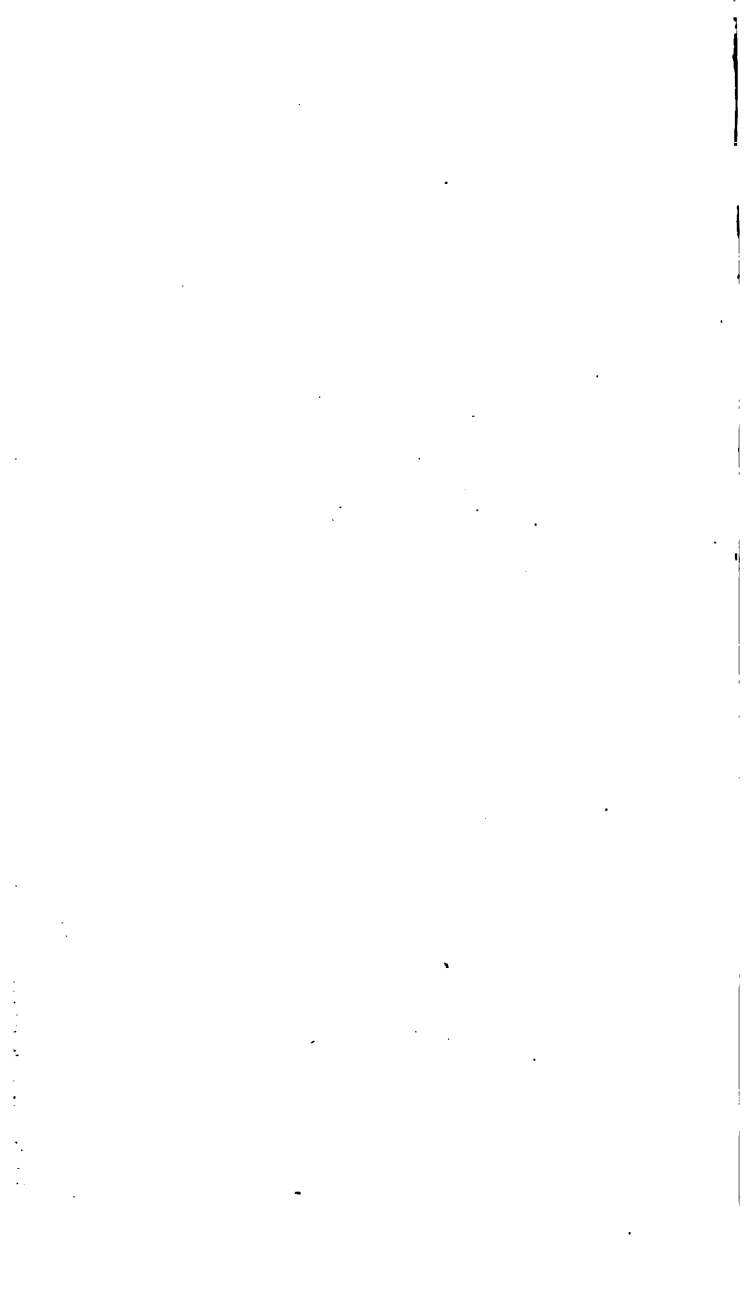
№ 12.

FABEVEEIBACACIACIABAIHIOCEMEIYAM

No 12.

size.

Actual



Amelchist

N^o 13.



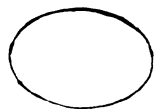
size

Actual



Cornelian.

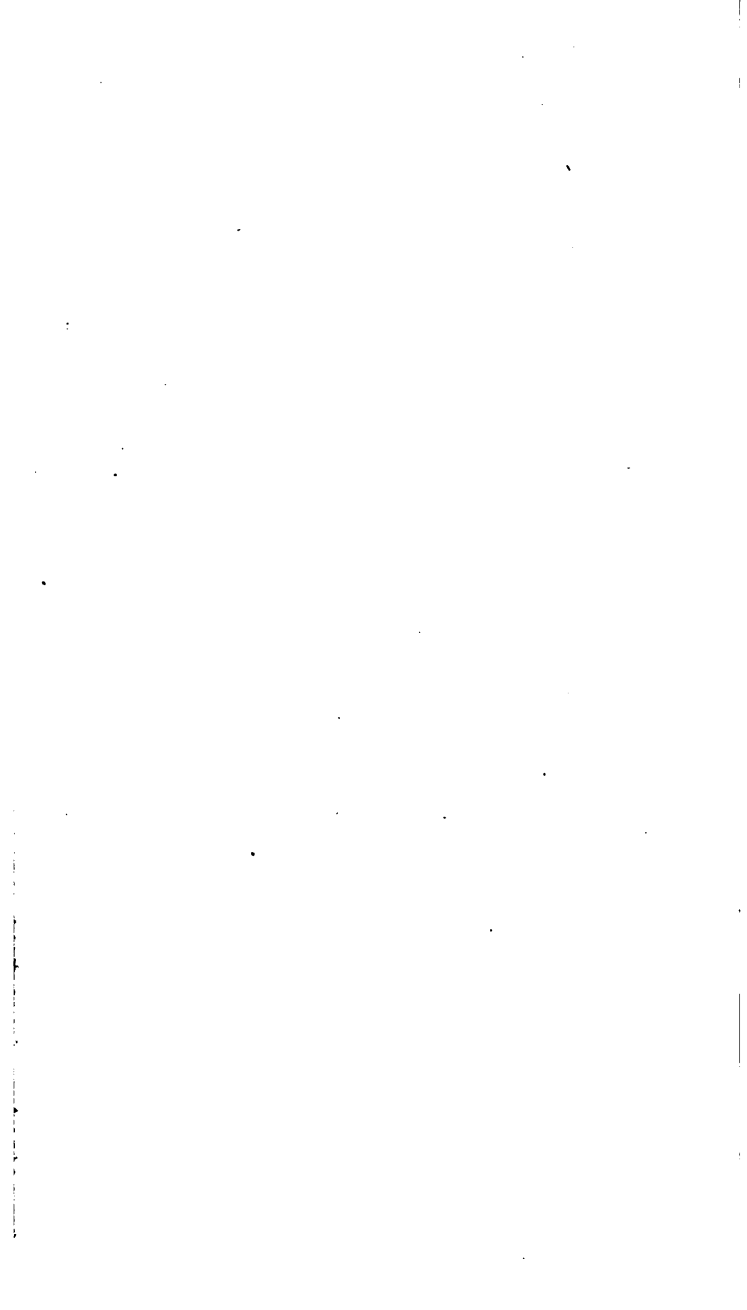
. No. 14.



Actual

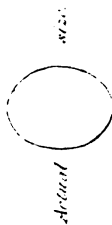


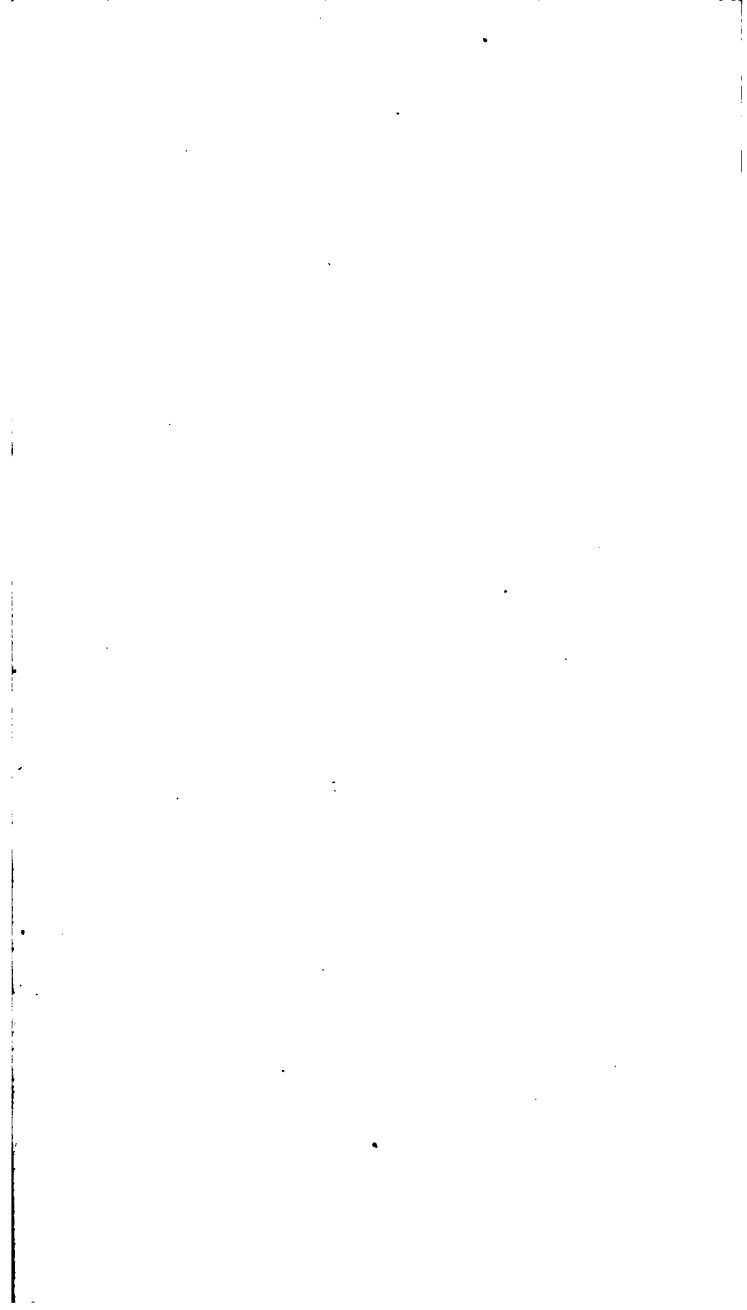
size.



Mass. Intell.

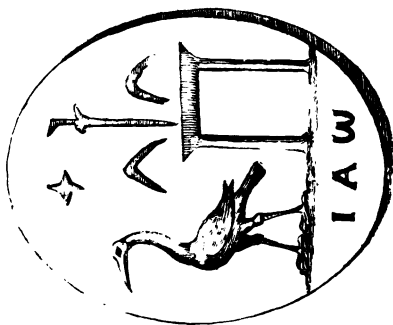
No 13.





Schist.

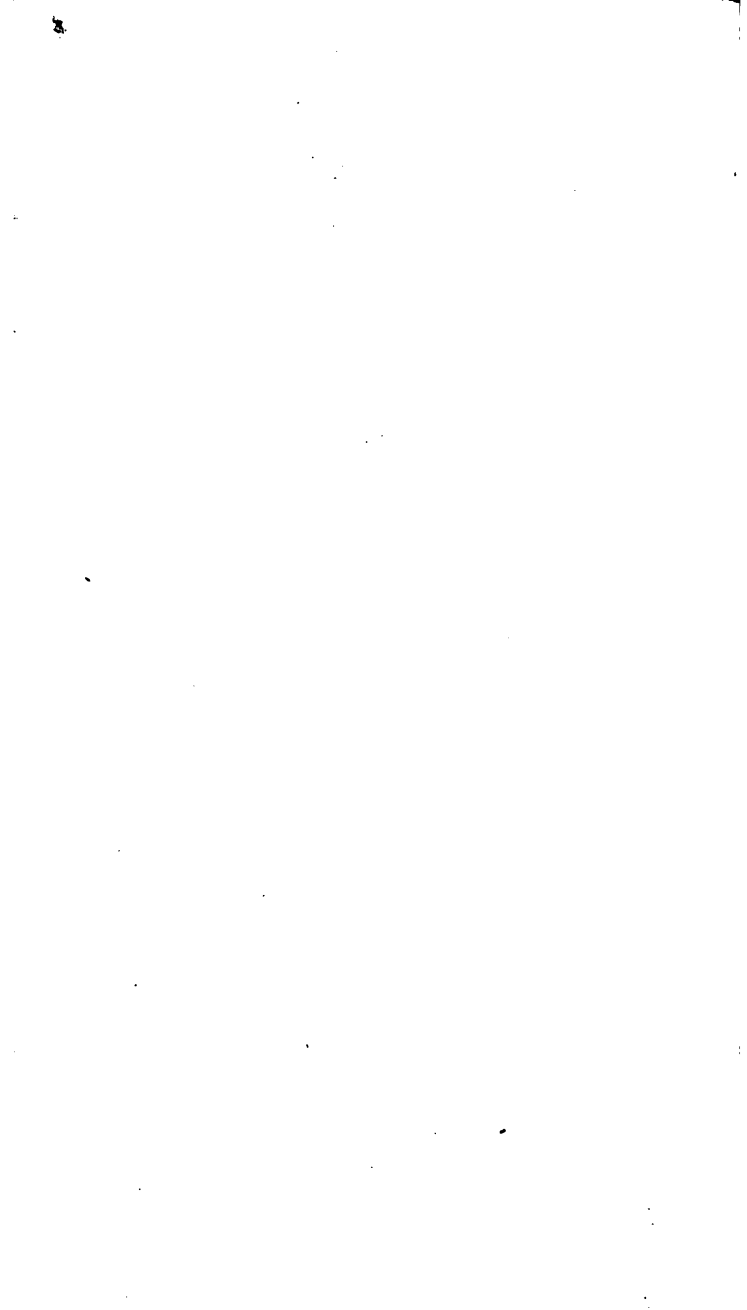
No 10.



Actual



size

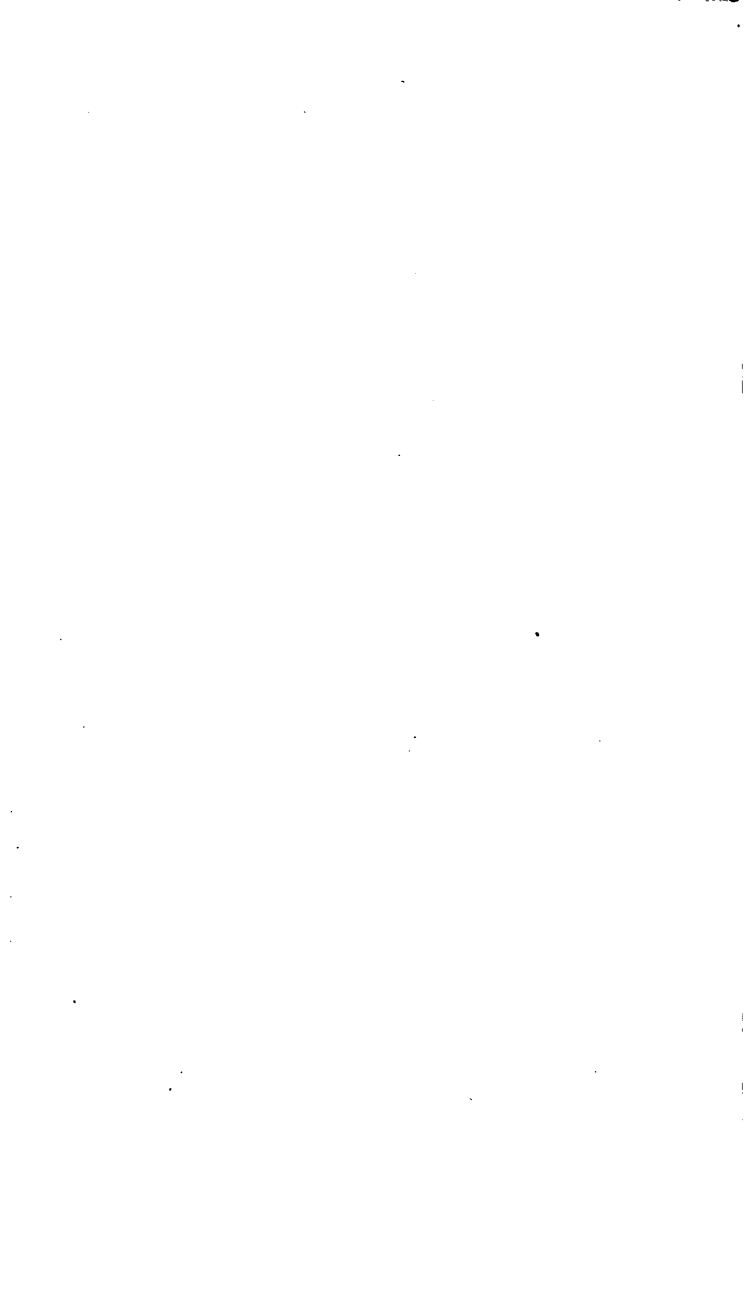


White Cornelian

. 75 17



Actual size





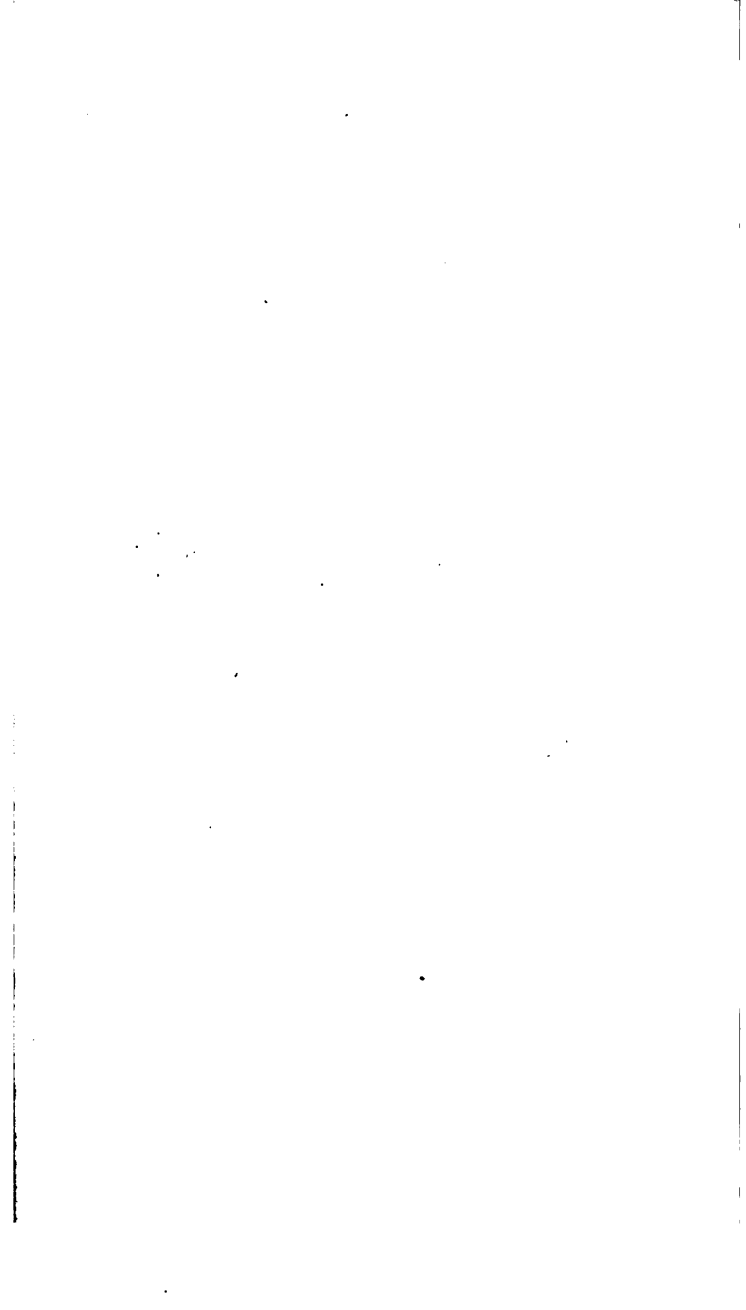
As a ring, it is supposed to be made of silver.

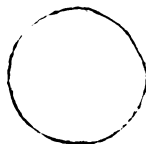
N. 18.



Size of the Ring.

Cornelium





Actual

size.

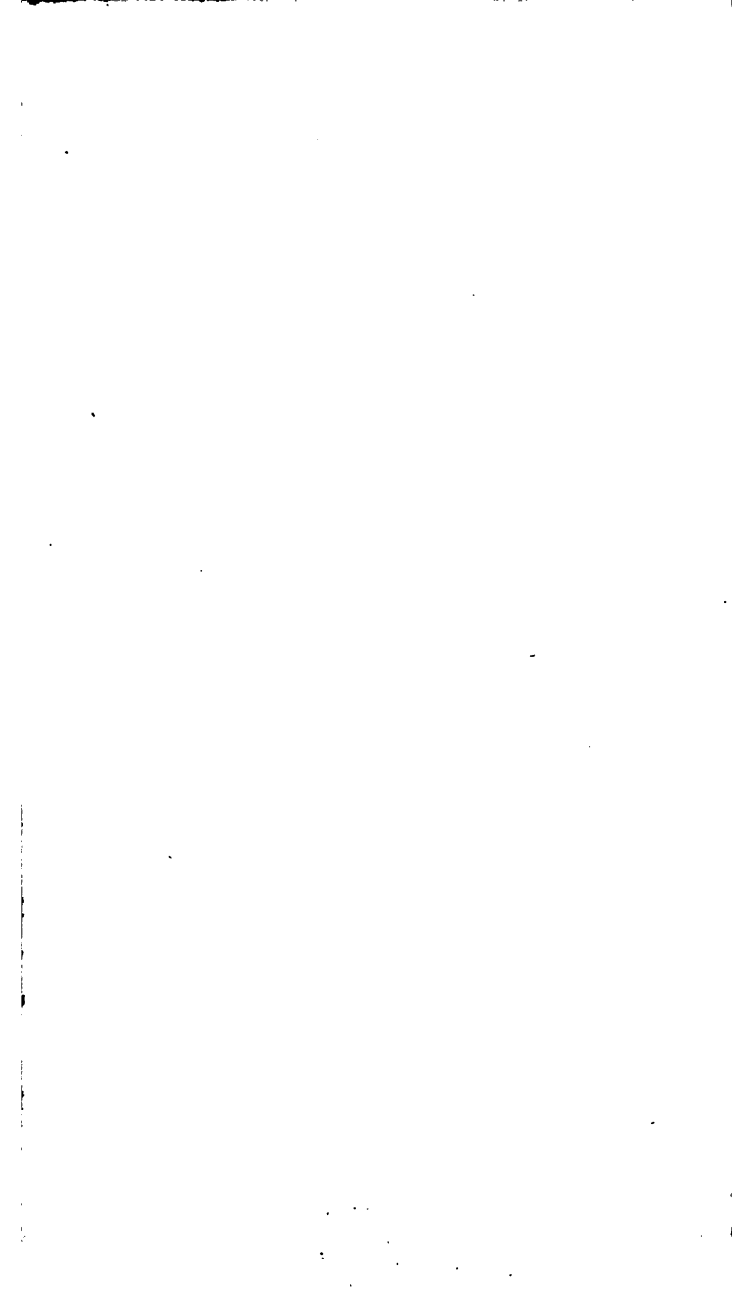


No. 19.

Gold.

T. Kelly del.

W. H. & G. Gardner, London.



Gold

1720



size.



Actual

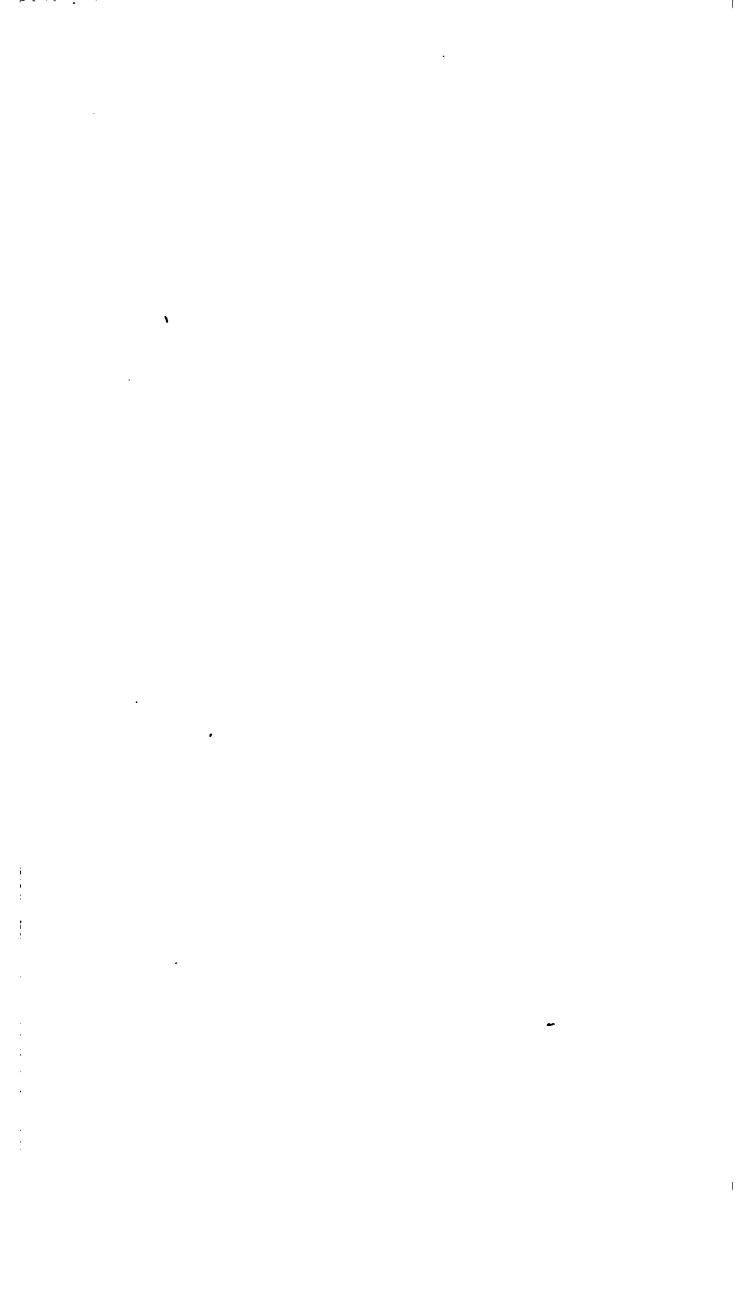


Brass.

№ 24.



Actual size.



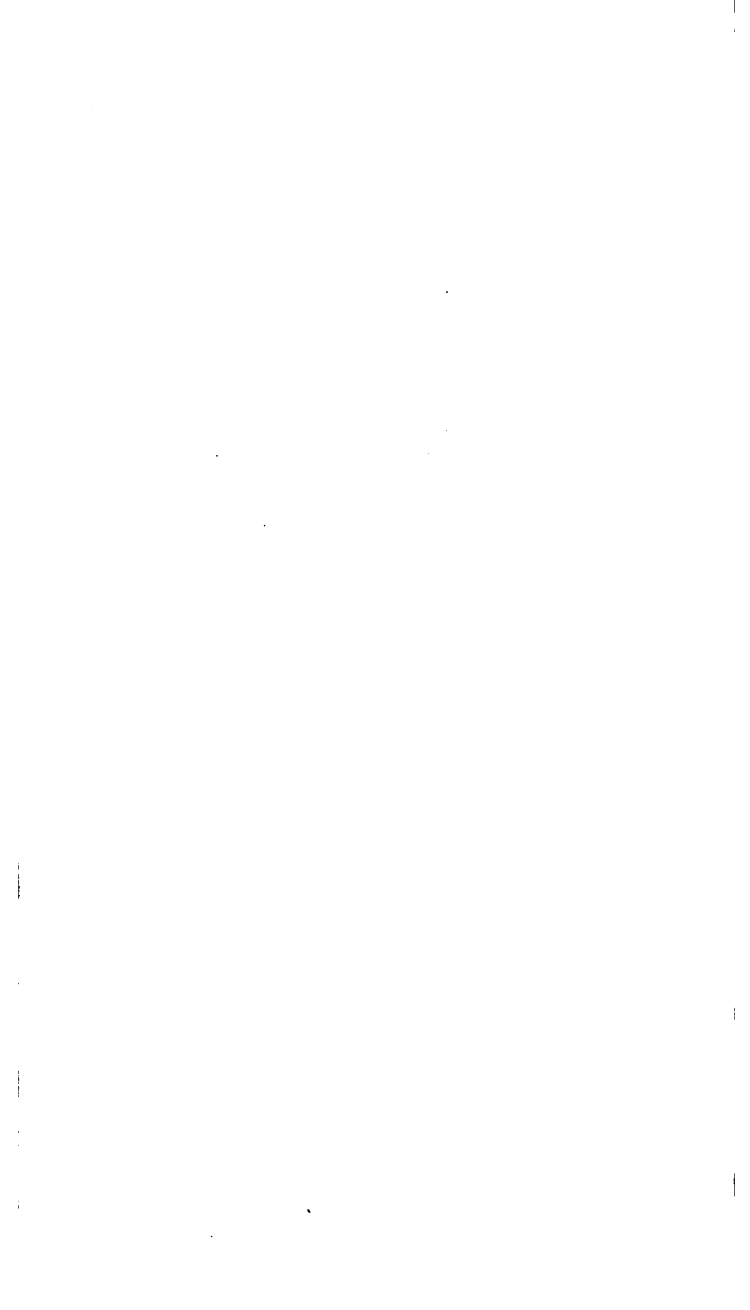
Brass

N^o 22.



Actual

size.



Brass

N^o 23



Actual size

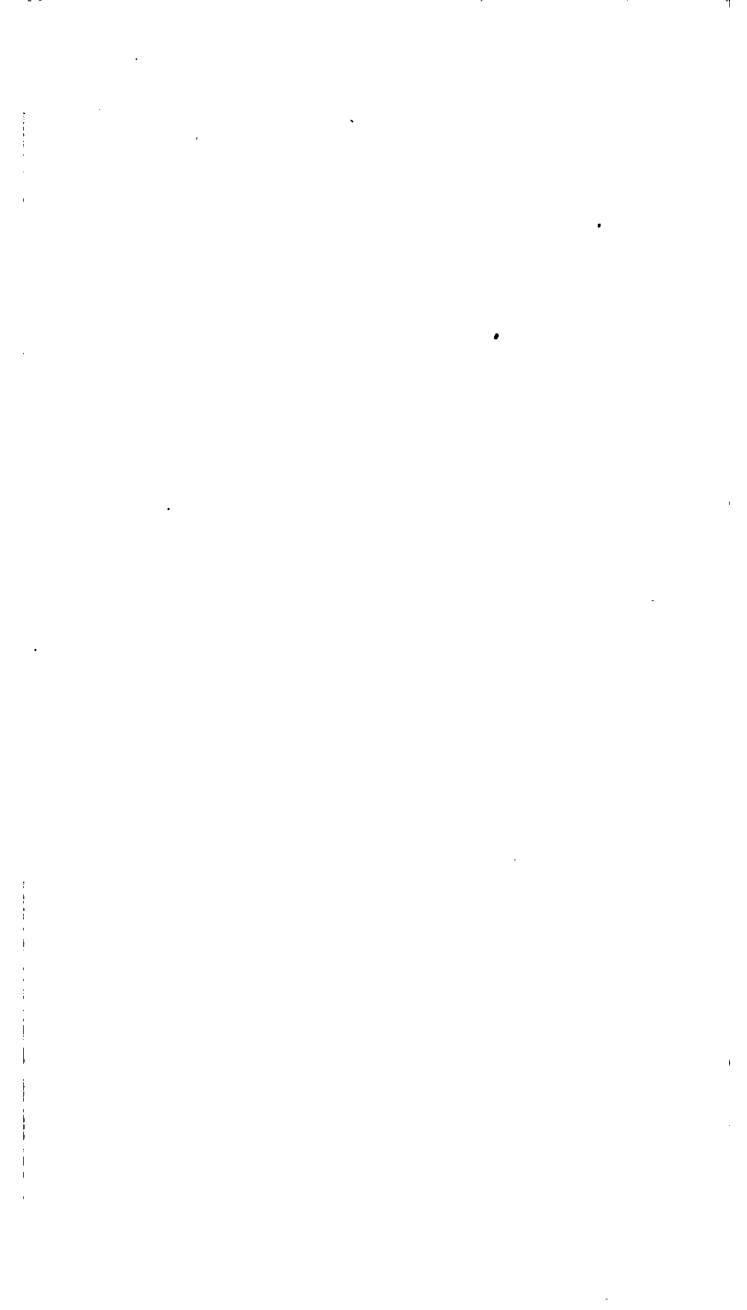


Brass.

Nº 24.



Actual size.

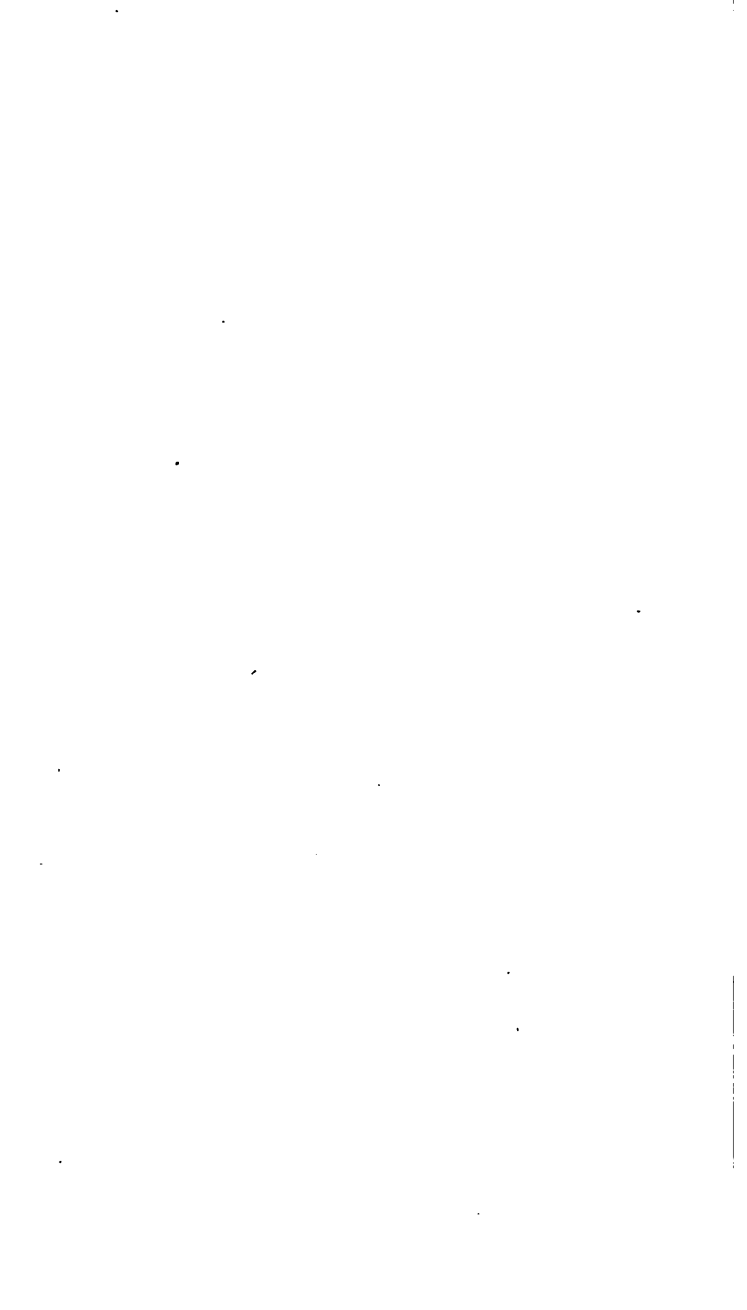


Brass

N^o 25.



Actual size.



Brass

1826



Actual size



Brass

Nº 27



Actual size



Brass

N^o 28



Actual

size



Gold.

N^o 29.



Actual size.



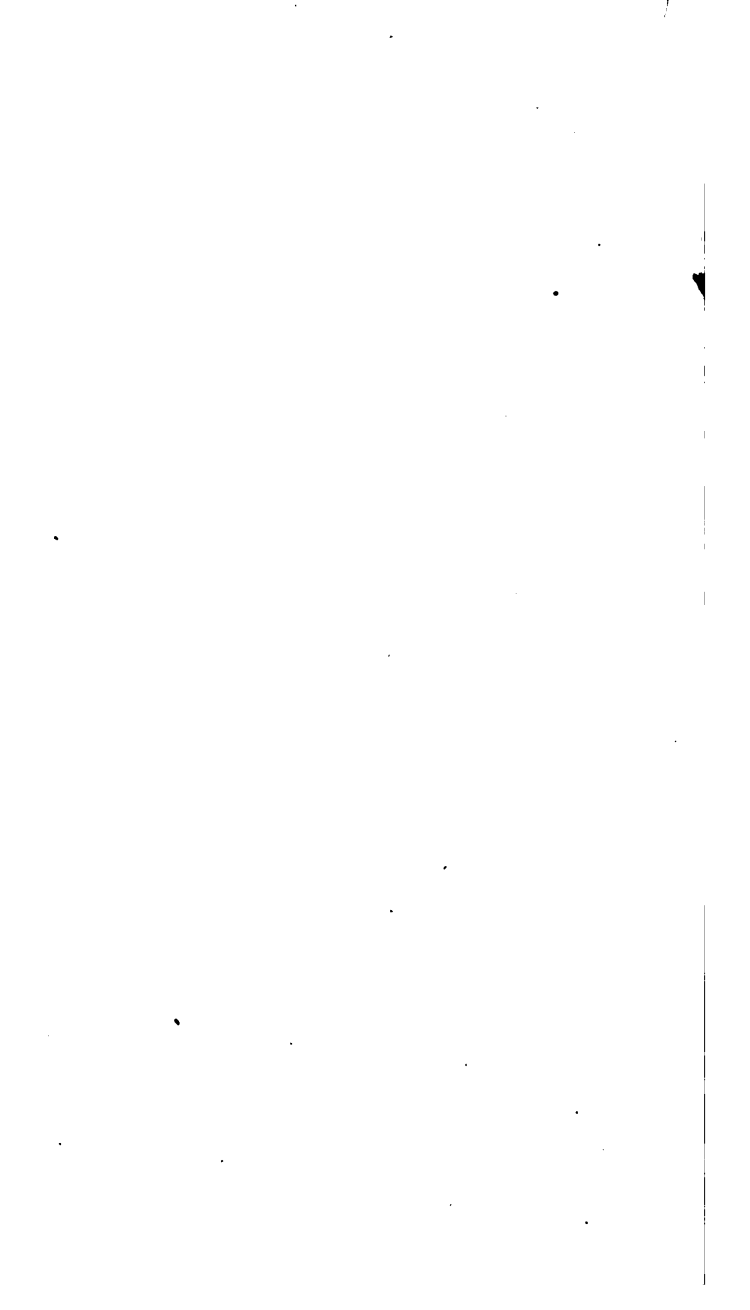
Silver

N^o 30.



Actual

size.

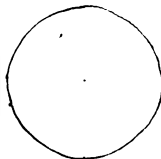


Brass

No 31



size

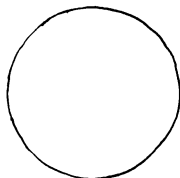


Actual



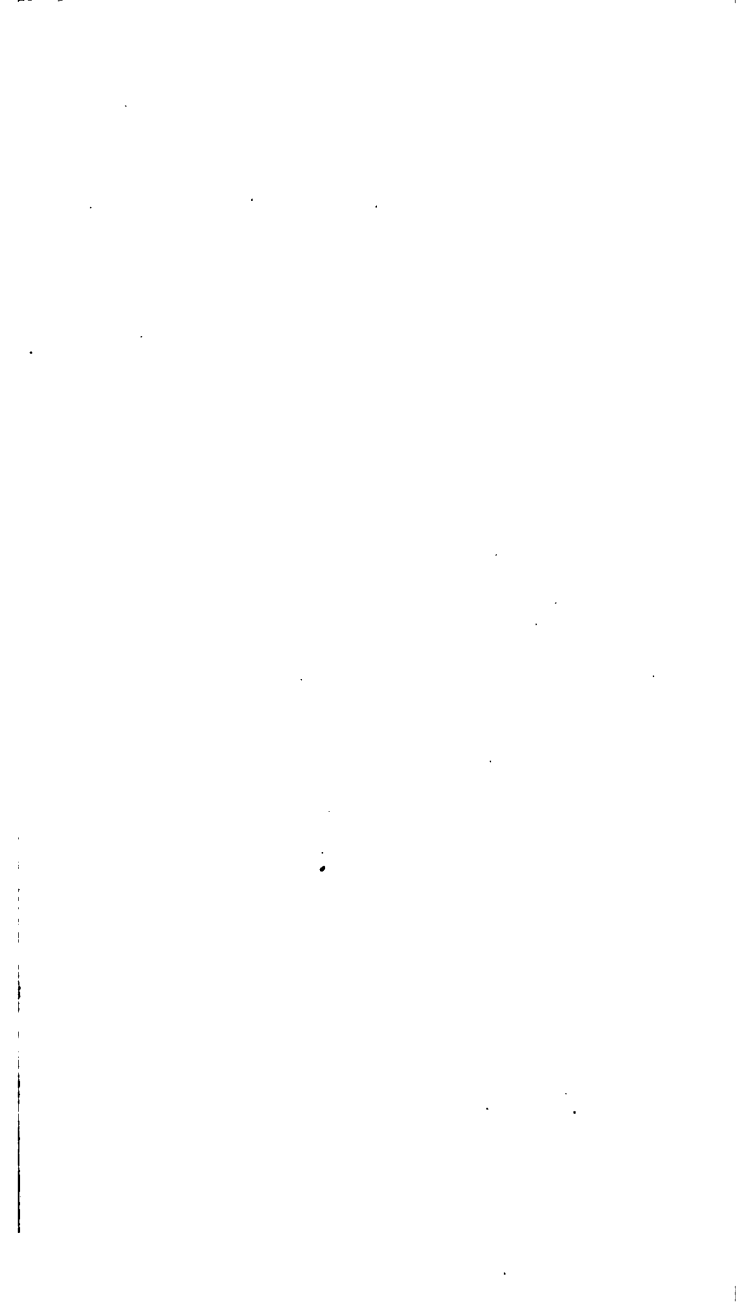
Gold.

N. 32



Actual

Size



Gold.

N^o 33.

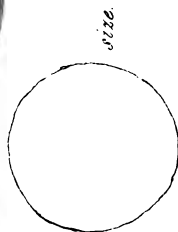


size



Actual

Brass.



Actual

size.

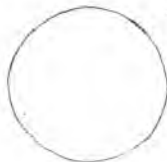


Gold

N. M.



size



Actual

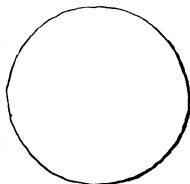


Gold.

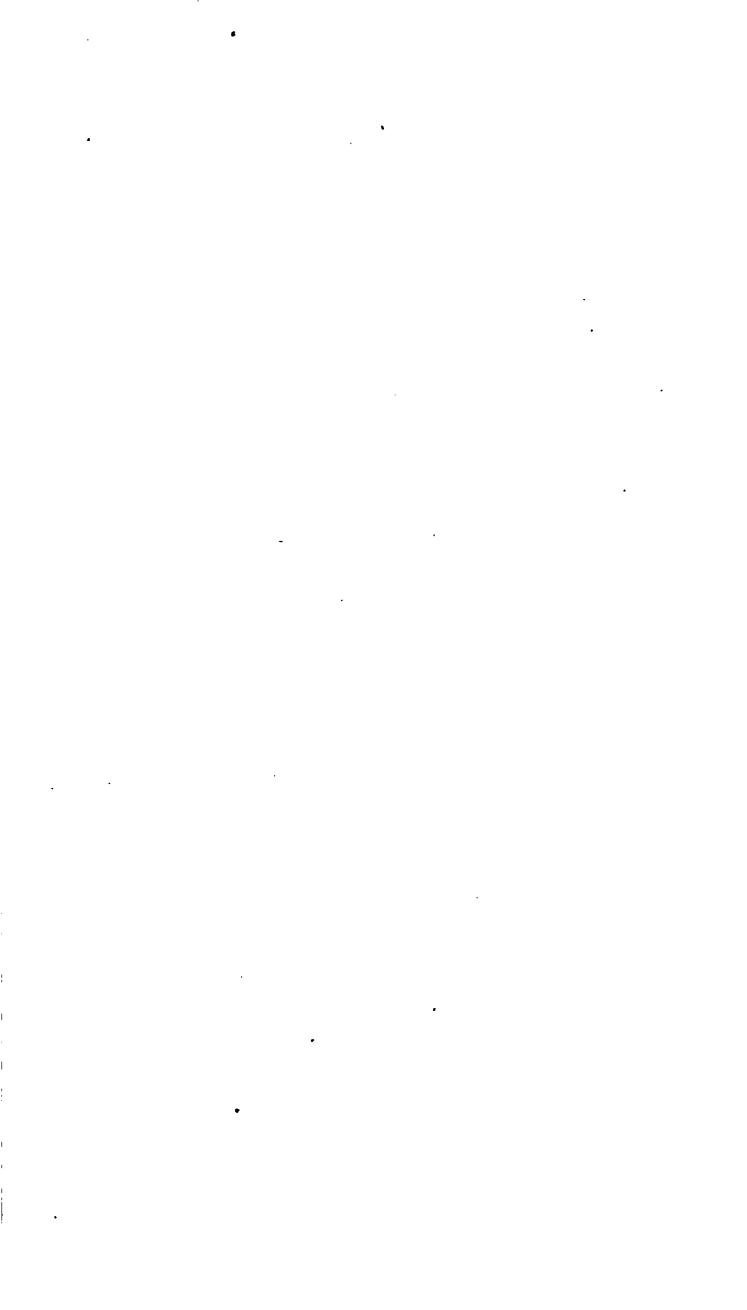
Nº 36.



size.

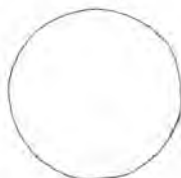


Actual



Gold

No 37



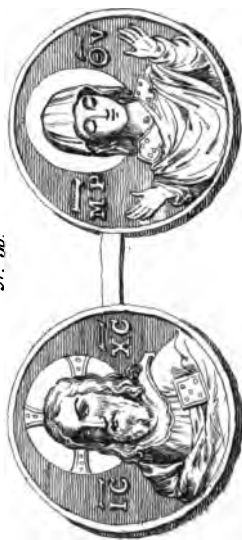
Actual

size



Brass.

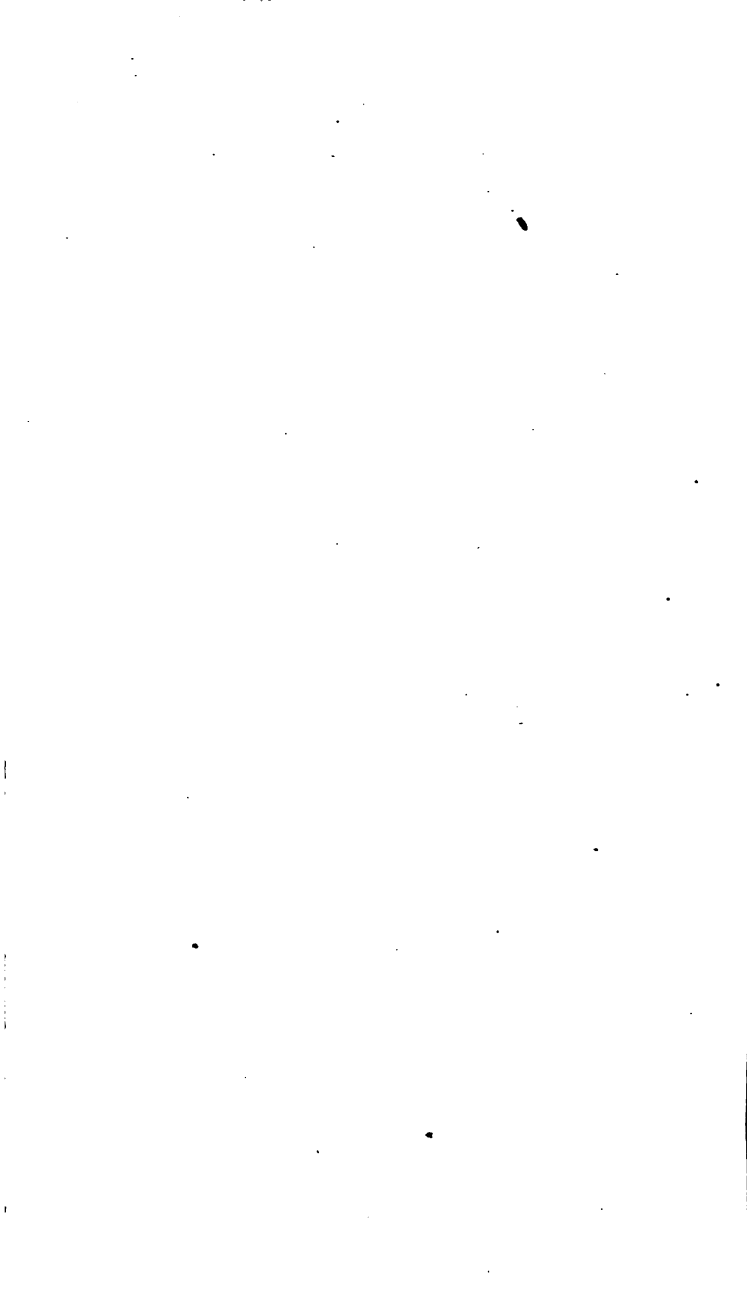
no. 38.



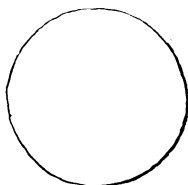
Actual size.

204





№ 36.



Actual

